Yemen reports new border tension

ADEN (R) — Yemen says Saudi forces attacked one of its posts in a disputed northern frontier area, scene of border tensions last month that led to at least one clash. An official statement issued in the Yemeni capital Sanaa said the attack was mounted on Sunday morning deep inside Yemeni territory in Saada, a northwestern province on the Red Sea. The statement, issued Sunday night, described the attack as new aggression. It charged "hawks" within the Saudi leadership were trying to derail reconciliation efforts by Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Saudi King Fahd. Yemen accused Saudi Arabia in December of violating its border by erecting observation posts and building roads in frontier areas including Saada. Diplomats in Sanaa said three Yemeni officers were killed in a border clash on Dec. 7. Riyadh said incidents took place within Saudi territory and proposed setting up a joint commission to investigate them. Saleh was expected to visit Saudi Arabia soon for talks with King Fahd. The official Saudi Press Agency said last week the two leaders spoke by telephone but it gave no further details.

Jordan Times

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Arab League chief visits Kuwait

CAIRO (AFP) — Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid left Egypt for Kuwait Monday on the first leg of a week-long Gulf tour aimed at healing rifts in the Arab World. The tour would be an opportunity to discuss a reconciliation between Arab countries split by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990," Dr. Abdul Meguid told journalists before leaving. He said that after a summit here last week between the leaders of Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia "there is a chance to improve the Arab atmosphere and work to achieve an inter-Arab reconciliation." The summit had marked a "promising step for the Arab World," he added. On Sunday Dr. Abdul Meguid said be expected an Arab League summit to be held in February for the first time since the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis.

Syria, Israeli army chiefs met at White House

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton met at the White House late last month Syria's and Israel's army chiefs of staff to underline his interest in the Middle East peace process, a U.S. government official said on Sunday. "It was an indication of his engagement with and interest in the promotion of the peace process," the official, who asked not to be further identified, said. He gave no further details of the meeting. The New York Times reported on Saturday the army chiefs of staff, Lieutenant-General Ehud Barak of Israel and Major-General Hikmat Shihabi of Syria, had capped their first publicly-announced meetings in Washington with a 40-minute session with Mr. Clinton. At the meeting Mr. Clinton was said to have expressed concern that time for a peace settlement was running out. The U.S. government official provided no specific date for the meeting.

Carlos charged with station attack

PARIS (AFP) — International extremist Carlos the Jackal was charged Monday in connection with the 1983 bombing at Marseille railway station which killed two people and injured 34, judicial sources said. Carlos, who has been in custody in Paris since being extradited from Sudan last August, was charged in particular with murder, attempted murder, damage to property and explosives offences, the sources said.

Bosnian Croats sign 4-month truce

ZAGREB (R) — Bosnian Croats on Monday signed up to a four-month countrywide ceasefire already agreed to by Serbs and Muslims, the United Nations spokesman reported. "Federation President Kresimir Zubak signed the ceasefire today on behalf of the Croats in presence of (U.N. commander in Bosnia) Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose," spokesman Thant Myint-U told Reuters. The agreement was signed in the Croat stronghold of Mostar in southern Bosnia, after the U.N. repeatedly voiced its concern over reports that Bosnian Croat troops were still fighting the Serbs despite the truce (see related stories inside).

Egyptian police in fresh sweep

MINYA (AFP) — Police questioned hundreds of people and made dozens of arrests in southern Egypt after suspected Islamic militants shot dead eight policemen and three civilians in a wave of attacks on Monday. Security was tightened at the sites of the killings in Minya province. The Interior Ministry and police said the four attacks all took place near the town of Mallawi, about 300 kilometres south of Cairo, within the space of an hour (see page 12).

King returns home; cabinet change/ reshuffle expected

By Ghadeer Taher
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein returned last night from a private visit to Austria with the first task at home expected to be the appointment of a new government to replace Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali's cabinet.

Informed sources expected King Hussein to ask Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker to head the new government, which will have to deal with the political and economic changes accompanying the Jordan-Israel peace agreement, the Kingdom's regional role, internal politics and relations with the Palestine National Authority.

Government sources would only say that they have not heard anything official on a cabinet change.

Independent sources said that a new government may be formed as early as Thursday. However, the sources cautioned that nothing was definite yet.

The sources said King Hussein's statements to representatives of the local press last week indicated that the Kingdom was gearing up for a major government overhaul.

They said the King wants to appoint a new government that can deal with new realities on the ground.

"Reorganisation is necessary since this is a new, different era in Jordan's life and it needs to be governed by a new spirit and fresh efforts," the King told journalists.

The King did not say whether he would appoint a new government or order a major reshuffle to undertake the job, but reports since then have strongly indicated that a new prime minister would be appointed to deal with the peace era and with the challenges Jordan faces internally and otherwise.

The sources, who spoke to the Jordan Times yesterday, said the King's reference to profound change at the meeting, from which Dr. Majali was conspicuously absent, indicated that the reorganisation that he had in mind may go beyond the government to include the Royal Court and other official institutions.

"Change is made necessary sometimes not because (officials) have not performed well, but rather because new responsibilities and different people are required to handle them," the King told journalists.

Sharif Zeid, who formed his first government in 1989 and stepped down in late 1989 after overseeing the first democratic elections in the country since 1956, is tipped by political sources to succeed Dr. Majali, who has been in office since May 1993.

Sharif Zeid took over the premiership again in October 1991 and stayed in power without changes until the appointment of Dr. Majali.

The sources said that after the 1995 budget was endorsed by the Lower House of Parliament with a 52-22 vote last week, Dr. Majali's resignation was "only a matter of time which will not exceed one to two weeks."

The Senate is expected to endorse the budget in the next several days after which it will be signed into law by the King.

Earlier, observers predicted that the King may turn to someone ouside the "club of prime ministers" in reference to six men who have taken turns in heading the government over the last quarter century to form a new government.

According to the sources, the new government, whether a reshuffled one under Dr. Majali or otherwise, may include the following: Deputies Abdul Kareem Kabariti, Saleh Irsheidat, Ali Abu Ragheb, Samir Habashneh, Awad Khleifat, Aref Batayneh, Abdullah Ensour, Abdul Karim Dughmi and Abdul Hadi Majali, former Finance Minister Basil Jardaneh, former Interior Minister Salem Masadeh, former Information Minister Ibrahim Izzeddin, Minister of Supply Adel Qudah, and Minister of Industry and Trade Rima Khalaf.

One of the strongest contenders to replace Sharif Zeid, if he is appointed prime minister at the Royal Court is the King's political advisor Marwan Al Qassem. But the sources cautioned that the King, who is known to keep his options open until the last moment, may surprise everyone and keep Dr. Majali on as premier or make a surprise appointment.

Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor Monday by His Royal Highness Crown Prince are received upon their return home on Hassan (Petra photo)

King says check-ups on ear 'comforting,' surgery needed

AMMAN (Petra) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor returned home Monday after a several-day visit to Austria where the King underwent medical check-ups on his middle ear that be said were "comforting" and that he might have to undergo a minor operation which was not urgent.

In statements to the press at the airport, King Hussein also wished all Jordanians a very Happy New Year.

Replying to a question on the prevailing situation in the Arab World in light of recent developments, the King said: "I always wish the brethren luck and hope that their contacts would bear fruits benefitting this nation and serving its interests. We always welcome this."

The King said he might be visiting the United States in two months.

On the domestic scene, which is rife with suggestions that a change of government or a major Cabinet reshuffle is imminent, the King said: "We are in a situation in which we continue to reconsider our conditions. Thank God, we have come a long way and we are thankful and grateful to all who shouldered responsibilities at this critical stage with honour, honesty and loyalty."

"I think that we should also reconsider our situation in terms of the need for a new start with regard to the responsibilities and challenges of the future," he added.

Their Majesties were received at the airport by Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath as well as other members of the Royal family, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Lower House Speaker Saad Hayel Srour, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid and other senior Royal Court, government and military officials.

The King was accompanied on his trip by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Ali and Prince Hamzeh.

Israel to halt settlement building

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The Israeli government decided on Monday to halt construction at a Jewish settlement site in the occupied West Bank that Palestinians said posed a threat to peace moves.

But the cabinet, after a three-hour meeting, said it would offer settlers building the 500-unit project an alternative site closer to an existing Jewish settler community.

Both Palestinians and settlers rejected the compromise.

"The government has decided to suspend the permit... for construction at Givat Tamar," said a government statement.

Saeb Erekat, a member of the Palestinian self-rule authority, said in response: "(Prime Minister Yitzhak) Rabin cannot solve the problem by moving his bulldozers from one side of the mountain to the other."

"We don't accept this government decision... construction here will continue," said settler leader Aharon Domb.

Four ministers from the leftist Meretz party voted against the decision, saying construction should be halted altogether.

Palestinians have called the expansion of the settlement a violation of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace agreement.

Mr. Rabin told parliament during a break in the cabinet meeting set to decide the fate of a 500-unit housing project on a hill near Al Khader village, several kilometres from Efrat Jewish settlement.

"Under no circumstances will we continue to work at Givat Tamar (site near Al

(Continued on page 2)

Israelis kill Palestinian policeman at Erez, another in Hebron

EREZ, Gaza Strip (AFP) — Israeli soldiers on the border with the autonomous Palestinian Gaza Strip killed a Palestinian policeman and injured two more Monday at the Erez border crossing, Palestinian hospital sources said.

The policeman was part of the Palestinian security force, and died in hospital in Gaza City, the sources said.

Israeli television reported that Israeli soldiers in an observation post had opened fire on Palestinians who had shot at them.

Earlier on Monday, Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian in a gunbattle near Hebron in the occupied West Bank and 10 others were wounded in clashes which erupted afterwards, Palestinians said.

The officials said the incident in the village of Beit Aoua took place when troops and frontier guards came under fire during a patrol.

Palestinian sources identified the dead man as Bassem Yunis Salem and said he was a supporter of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas.

They said a gunbattle broke out when the army tried to storm the house where Mr. Salem was staying. Another man escaped.

Heavy fighting waged across Chechen capital

GROZNY (Agencies) — Russian troops fought pitched battles with the ill-equipped fighters of rebel Chechenya on Monday and hundreds of people are reported killed.

Authorities in Moscow said their troops were "regrouping" — a tacit admission of the difficulty in subduing Grozny to crush Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev's independence bid.

Russian tanks, forced to retreat by Chechen fighters after a New Year's Eve push into the Chechen capital Grozny, pounded the city from new positions.

Colonel Aslan Moshadov, commander in chief of Chechen armed forces said Russian forces had been routed from Grozny by Chechen forces.

But his rebel troops were braced for a fresh assault by regrouping Russian troops after two days of bitter clashes that he said had left hundreds of Russian dead.

In Moscow, government officials maintained their forces continued to control large parts of the capital.

Col. Moshadov said at the rebel republic's presidential palace here: "The Russian armed force that stormed the city of Grozny two days ago is practically defeated."

The palace, the symbol of Chechenya's three-year struggle for independence from Russia, was firmly in Chechen hands at 2:00 p.m. (1100 GMT) and hundreds of Chechen soldiers could be seen patrolling openly in the devastated city centre.

At least a dozen destroyed Russian tanks or armoured cars and a dozen badly mutilated or burnt corpses of Russian soldiers lay in the debris within 100 metres of the presidential building.

"The city, in general, is under the control of the (Chechen) government forces," Col. Moshadov said.

But in Moscow, defense and interior ministry officials maintained that Russian forces "continue to control a large part of Grozny and are flushing out groups of bandits from the city streets."

The Russian government's press centre quoted the officials as saying their forces had "regrouped in central Grozny and its suburbs overnight and this (Monday) morning."

It added that "the presidential palace, near which there was exchange of gunfire, was sealed off" by Russian forces and "the situation is tense."

A massive Russian force of tanks and armoured cars stormed Grozny in Saturday but failed to take the centre after fierce resistance by Chechen soldiers.

Col. Moshadov said 800 to 1,000 Russian soldiers had been killed in the fighting, which claimed the lives of only "dozens" of Chechens. There were no independent casualty figures.

He said 60 to 80 Russians had been taken prisoner and the brigade commander had been killed.

But the Chechen victory was far from final, Col. Moshadov said. "We're expecting another attempt to storm Grozny," he added.

Three pro-reform deputies demanded the resignation of the Russian defence minister and the deputy premier responsible for Chechenya blaming them for "massive violation" of human rights in the republic.

The three, who had just returned from a fact-finding mission to Grozny, told a news conference that they had asked to see President Yeltsin "to inform him about what is happening there" as "he is obviously not aware" of the situation.

The deputies, Viktor Sheiniss, Lev Ponomarev and Gleb Yakunin, said that Defence Minister Pavel Grachev and Nikolai Yegorov, the deputy prime minister responsible for nationalities, should resign for the "massive violation" of human rights in the pro-independence republic.

The deputies said that the Russian army offensive on Grozny had already left "several hundreds" of Russian soldiers dead along with more than 1,000 civilians.

ITAR-TASS news agency quoted the government press office as saying that Chechens were resisting the Russian advance from more than 50 positions.

The fighting was the fiercest in the three-week campaign to force oil-producing Chechenya to submit to Moscow's demand to abandon its independence drive.

In Grozny, missiles screamed overhead and residents ran for cover as planes swooped low over largely pulverised buildings.

The campaign — the Kremlin's biggest military operation since the 10-year Afghan war — and the high number of casualties have proved deeply unpopular and generated a firestorm of protest against President Boris Yeltsin from Russian liberals.

Criticism in the West has been muted so far.

But incoming U.S. Senate majority leader Robert Dole suggested on Sunday the conflict could threaten Russian democracy and place in question aid to Moscow.

In Germany, Russia's biggest trade partner in the West, foreign ministry deputy spokesman Martin Erdmann said Moscow had violated human rights and disregarded a European Union (EU) request to keep its way of dealing with Chechen rebels "in proportion."

France, the EU president, said it might try to work out a peaceful settlement of the Chechenya conflict through the 53-nation Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The French spokesman said Moscow had received favourably an EU appeal for a peaceful solution on Friday.

Three EU envoys led by German Ambassador to Russia Otto von der Gablentz met Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolai Afanasyevsky on Friday to express Europe's concern about bloodshed in the breakaway region and urge Moscow to seek a peaceful solution to the Chechen conflict.

France's call for OSCE involvement comes after Germany's Kinkel said in a radio interview earlier on Monday he had suggested Moscow ask the organisation to help resolve the conflict.

Mr. Kinkel said he had raised the subject of the pan-European body's possible intervention during an extensive conversation with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, but did not say how he had reacted.

$53m IMF credit gesture to Jordan is expression of confidence — Gammoh

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A recommendation by the managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to extend about $53 million in additional credit facilities to Jordan is an expression of IMF confidence in the Kingdom's economic performance and determination to implement reforms, Finance Minister Sami Gammoh said Monday.

Mr. Gammoh was commenting on a letter he had received by IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus underlining the world body's high rating of Jordan's adherence to the fiscal restructuring programme which it is implementing in coordination with the IMF.

Mr. Camdessus also said that he was recommending to the IMF Executive Board to extend 36.5 million special drawing rights (SDRs), equivalent to about $53 million, in additional assistance to help Jordan adjust its balance of payments.

The fresh facility, expected to be approved by the IMF board later this month or early February, raises to more than $230 million the credit extended by the IMF to Jordan spread over three years beginning in mid-1994. It came in response to a request that Mr. Gammoh made to the IMF in November.

With the addition, Jordan stands to receive about $100 million in IMF credit during 1995, Mr. Gammoh said. The credit is offered at soft terms.

More important than the actual impact of the IMF credit on the Jordanian economy and fiscal status, the finance minister said, "is the fact that it is an expression of IMF confidence in Jordan's economic performance and its adherence to implementing the (restructuring) programme."

Another key impact of the IMF gesture is that donor countries which keep a close watch on beneficiary countries' economic programmes would also be assured of Jordan's determination to carry out economic reforms and encouraged to look more favourably to the Kingdom's requests for fresh assistance.

Mr. Camdessus, in his letter to Mr. Gammoh, a copy of which was made available to the Jordan Times, underlined the same point.

"I have reviewed recent economic developments in Jordan based on the assessment of the recent (IMF) mission (to Jordan) and I am impressed by the determination of the authorities to steadfastly implement their medium-term adjustment and structural reform programme," the letter said. "Your resolve to proceed with a strategy conducive to private sector investment and domestic export growth is crucial for Jordan at this time, particularly in view of recent regional developments."

Michel Camdessus

While the IMF managing director did not spell it out, his reference was to the better-than-expected performance of the Jordanian economy in terms of the IMF programme during 1994. While the annual growth is expected to be a satisfactory 5.5 per cent to six per cent, inflation remained lower than projected and exports also grew beyond anticipated figures.

"Given Jordan's impressive policy actions and its commitment to sustaining and broadening its economic adjustment and reform programme, I am pleased to inform you that I am again prepared to recommend to the Executive Board that favourable consideration be given to financial assistance in 1995 of SDR 36.5 million (30 per cent of Jordan's quota) over and above the already scheduled purchases under the EFF (extended funds facility) for 1995," said Mr. Camdessus in his letter.

"In addition to the direct support for your economic programme, I hope that such an initiative will facilitate your efforts in seeking other sources of external assistance," he wrote. "It signals our confidence in the Jordanian authorities' resolve to implement fully needed economic and financial policies."

PROTEST PRAYER: Palestinians in the West Bank village of Al Khader hold a protest-prayer as the Israeli soldiers forbid them to demonstrate on Monday, as they wait for an Israeli government decision to halt construction that will expand the Israeli settlement of Ephrat. Villagers say that the land has belonged to them for generations and the whole issue is now threatening the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians (see page one) (AFP photo)

Siad Barre dies in exile

MOGADISHU (R) — Former Somali President Mohammad Siad Barre died in exile on Monday, his son said.

"He (Siad Barre) has been diabetic and we took him to hospital this morning where he died," his son, Diriye Barre, told Reuters in Nigeria.

Earlier in the Somali capital Mogadiahn, U.N. spokemsan George Bennett said Siad Barre died from a heart attack on Sunday.

Siad Barre, who seized power in a 1969 coup, was toppled in January 1991 by forces loyal to faction leader Mohammad Farah Aideed and the man who declared himself president after Siad Barre left, Ali Mabdi Mohammad.

Siad Barre fled from Mogadishu but held onto southwestern parts of the country which his son-in-law and former Defence Minister Mohammad Said Hersi, also known as "Morgan," controlled.

When be was overwhelmed, he fled to Nairobi in May 1992 but left for Nigeria two weeks later after Kenyan opposition groups complained the government was paying Siad Barre's bills at a luxury hotel.

Heavy fighting broke out in Mogadishu between supporters of General Aideed and Mr. Ali Mahdi after Siad Barre's defeat that carved the city in two, killed 30,000 people, and led to a famine that killed 10 times that number.

A U.S.-led multinational task force landed on the beaches of Mogadishu in December 1992 to stop the fighting and open up food corridors to bundreds of thousands of starving Somalis.

Siad Barre, aged about 84, is survived by two wives and 19 children, scattered around the world.

Diriye said the late Somali leader asked that his remains be interred in his home town, Garbahaarrey, in the East African country still torn by bloody civil war.

"What we are trying to do now is to organise how to take his body to his hometown," he said.

Siad Barre ruled Somalia with an iron hand after seizing power, survived an unsuccessful experiment with communism, war with neighbouring Ethiopia and a switch of allegiance from Moscow to Washington at the height of the cold war.

He also had to grapple with drought, economic stagnation, refugees, armed insurgency in the north of the country and widespread dissent both at bome and abroad.

Siad Barre ruled Somalia like a dictator for most of his 22 years in power.

Many blame him for fanning the clan rivalries that ruined the country and are expected to erupt with a vengeance when U.N. troops withdraw by March 30.

Driven by rebels from his palace in Mogadishu in 1991, Siad Barre was forced out of his stronghold in the southwest a year later. He fled first to Kenya with 1,200 supporters and members of his buge family before finding asylum in Nigeria in May 1992.

He was army commander when be seized power in 1969, pledging to preserve democracy and outlaw corruption and tribalism.

But his years in charge saw a failed alliance with communism, a disastrous war with neighbouring Ethiopia over the Ogaden region in 1977-78 and economic stagnation.

Israel to halt building

(Continued from page 1)

Khader)."

He said his comments were "the line which will guide the government."

The head of the Efrat local council, Yinon Ahiman, hailed the option as an "honourable end to the affair." But other leaders of the 100,000 Jewisb aettlera reacted angrily.

At the site near Bethlehem, bulldozers went on digging. Soldiers barred dozens of Palestinians from holding a sit-in.

Palestinian landowner Mohammad Salah, 47, said: "Settlement on the land of Palestine, whether on the hill of Batten Al Maasi or any other place is the same. There is no difference. Both areas belong to Al Khader."

Last week Israeli police and soldiers forcibly removed Palestinian protesters and Israeli sympathisers from the hilltop site between Al Khader and Efrat, each with a population of 7,000.

PNA Chairman Yasser Arafat last week called the construction of the Jewish settlement a "flagrant violation" of the PLO's September 1993 peace deal with Israel.

Palestinians organised against the settlement held a news conference in an East Jerusalem street on Monday after police set up roadblocks restricting entry to their hotel. Organisers said they were told the area was closed.

Some 2,000 demonstrators — including Palestinians and Israeli supporters — clashed with Israeli troops on Friday as they tried to march on the building site to stop the work.

PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath has warned that unless Israel pledges to stop all settlement work at the next round of self-rule talks to be held with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in Cairo on Tuesday the peace process could be plunged into a crisis.

The daily Haaretz said Monday Israel is to present the PLO with a long list of Palestinian "violations" of the antonomy accords at Tuesday's talks in Cairo.

The list, which will refer to dozens of clauses "not respected" by the Palestinian self-rule authority, will be handed over Tuesday to Dr. Shaath by Foreign Minister Peres.

Mr. Peres, who will head the Israeli delegation, will accuse the Palestinians of failing to hand over a list of all the Palestinian police working in the self-rule areas of Gaza and Jericho, the newspaper reported.

Israeli has also demanded that the PLO disarm the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad, and hand over those responsible for killing Israeli civilians or soldiers.

Military officials said Sunday that the Palestinian Authority had officially refused to hand over two men wanted for the murder of a Jewish settler on the Gaza Strip in March 1993.

Israel has also accused the Palestinian security services of operating in East Jerusalem. And it deems that stamps and passports being issued by the Palestinian Authority do not conform to the May autonomy accord.

"The Palestiniana are doing just what they please and are deliberately ignoring the accords. Sometimes they act in line with the text, sometimes they don't," one senior Israeli official told the paper.

"There have been a lot of violations and there has been no reply to our demands to the PLO," he added.

Power transfer in Kabul in 10 days — U.N. envoy

KABUL (AFP) — United Nations special envoy Mahmoud Mestiri concluded his two-day peace mission here Monday telling journalists he hoped for an imminent transfer of power by Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

"I hope within one week or 10 days," Mr. Mestiri said.

"I came for the issue of the transfer of power — that was the main object of my visit," he said before leaving for Pakistan.

Mr. Mestiri said he had proposed a "mechanism for the transfer of power" to Mr. Rabbani but declined to give details.

Political observers closely following events in Afghanistan have already reasoned that the issue of the transfer of power is somewhat of a red-herring as Mr. Rabbani, whose two-year ended Dec. 28, personally holds no real power but is a figure-head leader only.

Nevertheless, the various Afghan factions with the aid of U.N. mediation will still have to decide to whom and how power will be transferred.

Mr. Mestiri said he expected Mr. Rabbani's answer to his proposal in one or two days, after which he would consult with Afghan opposition leaders in the eastern provincial capital Jalalabad.

Mr. Rabbani's press spokesman Abdul Aziz Morad expressed support for the Mr. Mestiri mission but unlike the U.N. envoy did not commit himself to any fixed timetable for the transfer of power by Mr. Rabbani.

Militiamen battle for Mogadishu territory

MOGADISHU (R) — Rival Somali militiamen on Monday battled for a key district of Mogadishu for a third straight day to win access to the seaport before U.N. troops withdraw.

Fighting between Abgal and Murusade gunmen restarted shortly after dawn in the central Bermuda district next to the seaport and overlooking the U.N.-controlled airport, residents said.

There were no new casualty reports but at least five people were killed and 103 wounded on Saturday and Sunday in the street battles with mortars, recoilless cannon and heavy machineguns.

"The Bermnda fighting is very close to the seaport and that of course is what it's all about," said a U.N. official, adding that stray rounds were hitting the port and might hamper the pullback of troops and equipment when it resumes on Tuesday.

He said he did not believe that Abgal forces, led by self-declared President Ali Mahdi Mohammad, or rival militiamen loyal to warlord Mohammad Farah Aideed had any intention of hitting U.N. forces before they complete their pullout in March.

The Murusade militiamen are led by Mohammad Kanyare Afrah, wbo defected in September from Mr. Ali Madhi's coalition to Gen. Aideed's rival Somali National Alliance based in south Mogadishu.

He said the main U.N. concern was being hit by stray rounds.

A stray shell damaged a roof at the airport on Sunday but did not delay the departure of the first group of 259 Malaysian U.N. troops, leaving about 9,000 U.N. personnel in Somalia after the withdrawal of the Indian and Zimbabwean U.N. contingents.

U.N. troops are expected to abandon their fortified headquarters compound in Mogadishn in January and pull back to the seaport and airport, the two last staging posts before they leave.

The U.N. Security Council ordered all U.N. forces out of the broken Horn of Africa country by the end of March because of the failure of warlords to agree on peace and a new government.

The clashes are the worst to hit the capital since Abgal gunmen overran Murusade-held areas in Medina district last month after street fighting in which more than 20 people were killed.

In another development, Zimbabwe's news agency Ziana said on Monday two Somali families were seeking compensation totalling 64,000 Zimbabwean dollars ($8,000) from the Harare government, accusing Zimbabwean troops of killing a woman and wounding boy in 1993.

The agency, quoting an officer, said the Somalis insisted Zimbabwean troops had killed the unnamed woman and wounded a boy during a military sweep of Mogadishu's main Bakara market.

Foreign and Somali aid agencies in Somalia called at the weekend for the immediate unconditional release of 24-year-old French aid worker Rudy Marq, who was kidnapped two weeks ago.

"Aid agencies, by virtue of their bumanitarian mandates, can never give in to demands for payment of ransom for kidnapping," said a statement signed by seven international agencies and a Somali consortium.

They warned that because of increasing insecurity the aid organisations were under pressure to pull out.

"Each act of violence, such as kidnapping, only reinforces this view and risks a reexamination of the current operations," they said.

Mr. Marq, who works for Action International Contre la Faim (AICF-International Action Against Hunger), was abducted by gunmen demanding a $20,000 ransom and was seen on Tuesday by Somali Red Crescent officials who said he was in good health.

Gunmen demanding ransoms have kidnapped several foreign aid workers for ransom in the past year. They were all freed.

Velayati gets warm welcome in India

NEW DELHI (R) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati received a high-profile welcome Monday at the start of a three-day business tour of India, signalling an end to Indian sourness over a cancelled visit by Iran's president.

Mr. Velayati was received by Junior Foreign Minister Raghunandan Lal Bbatia and was scheduled to meet Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao with in hours of his arrival.

"Let's say it's not a protocol visit. It goes beyond formalities," an Indian official said.

During his two days in the Indian capital, Mr. Velayati was to stay at Delhi's majestic Hyderabad House, usually reserved for heads of governments.

Mr. Velayati carried a special message for Mr. Rao from Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani expressing his wish to visit India very soon, United News of India (UNI) reported.

Mr. Velayati headed a 13-member delegation to a meeting of the Indo-Iranian Joint Commission, wbieh coordinates economie cooperation. The two nations are negotiating a multi-billion dollar natural-gas pipeline to supply Iranian gas to India.

In addition to Mr. Rao, Mr. velayati was to meet President Sbankar Dayal Sharma and Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh before leaving for Calcutta Wednesday to attend a business conference.

Earlier, diplomats said Mr. Velayati would seek to soothe New Delhi's feelings, which were burt wben Mr. Rafsanjani cancelled a planned visit last year due to an outbreak of plague.

Mr. Velayati was expected to try to set a date for a visit later this year by Mr. Rafsanjani, who drew sharp criticism wben he cancelled his October trip but went ahead with a tour of Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia.

"We believe his first priority will be to seek new dates for Mr. Rafsanjani's visit. That meas assuaging the hurt feelings among Indians," a Western diplomat said.

The plague killed more than 50 people and prompted a long list of countries, led by the Arab Gulf states, to temporarily suspend trade and travel links with India.

An Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman said Mr. Velayati's visit was significant because it was the first to India by a senior member of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) following the group's summit meeting in Casablanca last month.

"It is important for us that a senior member of the OIC is coming to India immediately after its summit," he said.

At the Moroccan summit, the OIC called for a peaceful and political settlement of a dispute in the northern Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, where more than 17,000 people have died since a separatist revolt broke out in 1990.

New Delhi aeeuses its western neighbour, Pakistan, of training and arming militant separatists who operate in India's only Muslim-majority state. Pakistan says it provides only diplomatic and political backing to the separatists.

Islamabad, which bad failed to muster adequate support at the United Nations for resolutions criticising Indian rule in Kashmir, called the OIC declaration a major diplomatic victory.

New Delhi said the OIC had taken a "one-sided" view of the dispute by not singling out Pakistan for spreading violence.

Iran frequently criticises alleged buman-rights abuses by Indian troops in Kashmir, and New Delhi has rejected Iran's offer to negotiate a peace pact with Pakistan over Kashmir.

But Indian officials said Iran adopted a low-key approaeh to the issue at the OIC summit, perhaps sparing New Delhi a diplomatic setback.

NEWS IN BRIEF

American jailed for backing Hamas

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A military court on Monday sentenced an American of Palestinian origin to five years in jail for lending support to the militant Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, his brother said. Mohammad Abdul Hamiid Khalil Salah, 41 was also given a three-year suspended sentence by the court in the West Bank town of Ramallah, his brother Ibrahim said. He said Mr. Salah, who holds American citizenship, had been living in the United States for 20 years and was arrested while on a visit to his hometown of Kalandia in the occupied West Bank. Mr. Salah was charged with backing Hamas and with "presenting services to its members," Ibrahim said.

Arafat gives Christians land for Christmas

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Monday attended a Christmas service at the Greek Orthodox Church in Gaza and presented the small community with a plot of land. Father George Awwad, head of the 2,200-strong Greek Orthodox community here, thanked Mr. Arafat for the gift, to be used as a site for another church and a school. "This is a special feast, celebrated in freedom and under the rule of the Palestinian Authority," Father Awwad said. "We hope that next year we will be in our independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital."

Israeli extremists threaten to kill Rabin

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A group of Israeli extreme right-wingers threatened to kill Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, denouncing him as a "traitor" in a leaflet published Monday. "The Sword of David" which only has a few dozen members wrote in the leaflet that "Rabin's destiny is death." "Mr. Rabin is a traitor who sheds Jewish blood, wants to sell off Jerusalem and has given the assassin Yasser Arafat rights," it added, according to a report on Israeli radio.

China pledges to help end Iraq sanctions

BAGHDAD (AFP) — China's ambassador to Iraq, So Bi Gan, pledged Monday that Beijing would continue its efforts to end the four-year U.N. embargo on Iraq. "The Chinese government will continue its efforts in cooperation with France and Russia to obtain a declaration from the presidency of the Security Council recognising Iraq's positive attitude and cooperation with the United Nations," the daily Al Jumhuriya quoted him as saying. A meeting of the Security Council broke up on Thursday without agreeing on a declaration on Iraq. France, Russia and China insisted that it should contain a reference to a recent report by the U.N. disarmament commission on Iraq, which was seen as fairly positive for Baghdad.

JOB VACANCIES

International Marine & General Insurance Co. Ltd. (JEC) is seeking:

1. **Secretaries with** excellent typing skills in English and Arabic. The use of computer and fluency in English are a must.
   Shorthand is an advantage.
2. **Telephone Operator** with excellent command of English.

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Amman-Jordan
Attention: Mr. F. Hassan

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 ..... Pollaurds
17:30 ..... Que Le Meilluer Gagne
18:00 ..... Embarquement Porte 1
18:30 ..... Le Intrepides
19:00 ..... News in French
19:30 Practical Guide to the Universe
19:45 ..... Varities
20:00 ..... The Detectives
20:30 ..... Quantum Leap
21:10 ..... The Deep Probe
22:00 ..... News in English
22:20 ..... First Circle
23:10 ..... The Piglet Files

PRAYER TIMES

05:09 ..... Fajr
06:31 ..... *(Sunrise) Duha*
11:39 ..... Dhuhr
14:24 ..... 'Asr
16:47 ..... Maghreb
18:10 ..... 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swefieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasancta Church Tel: 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 630851. Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 652526.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel: 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazarene Tel.675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman
Tel. 811295.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be sunny with temperatures rising further and winds southeasterly light to moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman	3/16
Aqaba	7 / 21
Deserts	1/ 18
Jordan Valley	9 / 23

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 13, Aqaba 20, Humidity readings: Amman 55 per cent, Aqaba 37 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Yousef Abdo 694916
Dr. Bassam Qaddumi 648633
Dr. Yousef Al Faqih 756988
Dr. Jum'a Abu Dhiab 758848
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778536
Al Ascma pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairouih pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Fayez Al Qadi 248743
Alquds pharmacy ..... (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Khalil Abu Hussein ... 985900
Khalileh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192. 621111. 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630221
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-532000
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity. J. Amn 644281/6
Akileh Maternity. J. Amn. 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas. J. Amman 636140
Palestine. Shmeisani 664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mwasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic. Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli. Abdali 664164/6
Italian. Al-Muhajreen ... 777101/3
Al-Bashir. J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army. Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 686100
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital ..... (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital ..... (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital ..... (02)247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital ..... (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

04:00 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:30 ..... Damascus (RJ)
09:15 ..... Aqaba (RJ)
09:55 ..... Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:55 ..... Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 ..... Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
14:00 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)
14:35 ..... London (RJ)
16:45 ..... Frankfurt (RJ)
16:50 ..... Cairo (RJ)
17:30 ... Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:20 ..... Vienna (OS)
17:05 ..... Rome (AZ)
20:00 ..... Aden (DY)
20:20 ..... Beirut (ME)
23:20 ..... Amsterdam (KL)
23:50 ..... Bucharest (RO)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:00 ..... Aqaba (RJ)
08:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:00 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)
11:00 ..... Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:30 ..... Vienna, Brussels (RJ)
11:05 Aqaba, Rome, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:35 ..... Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
11:55 ..... Paris (RJ)
12:00 ..... London (RJ)
12:45 ..... Cairo (RJ)
20:05 ..... Larnaca (RJ)
20:30 ..... Jeddah (RJ)
21:45 ..... Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:10 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:45 ..... Damascus, Paris (AF)
10:15 ..... Larnaca, Rome (AZ)
13:50 ..... Vienna (OS)
14:00 ..... Khartoum (SD)
18:05 ..... Damascus (AZ)
21:00 ..... Aden (DY)
00:20 ..... Amsterdam (KL)
00:50 ..... Bucharest (RO)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman ... 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman ... 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Uppersflower price in fils per kg.

Apple	700/ 400
Banana	680
Banana (Mukammar)	620
Cabbage	200 / 100
Carrot	280/180
Cauliflower	450/ 250
Clementine	320/ 200
Cucumbers (large)	200 / 120
Cucumbers (small)	400 / 280
Eggplant	360/ 220
Garlic	480/350
Grape Fruit	240 / 160
Lemon	260 / 160
Marrow (large)	180 / 100
Marrow (small)	340 / 200
Onion (green)	320/ 200
Onion (dry)	400 / 300
Orange	520/300
Pepper (hot)	540 / 300
Pepper (sweet)	600 / 400
Potato	320/ 200
Radish	250 / 150
Spinach	280/180
String Beans	850/600
Tomato	440/240

هكذا من الأصل

Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Monday receives the president and members of the Amman Chamber of Commerce at Queen Ali Fund for Social Development Headquarters (Petra photo)

Chamber of Commerce promises support to QAF Ramadan campaign

AMMAN (Petra) — The Amman Chamber of Commerce Monday pledged to fully back a charity programme carried out annually during the month of Ramadan by the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF).

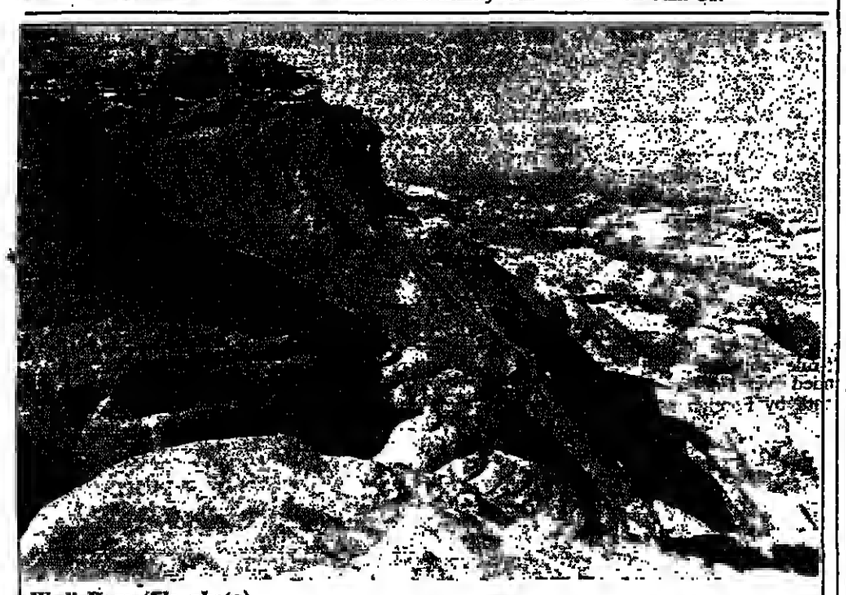
At a meeting of chamber members and Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, honorary president of the QAF Board of Trustees, Chamber Chairman Haidar Murad said that the chamber this year will not only support the charity campaign but will also adopt plans to encourage all sectors of the society to generously contribute to it and offer assistance which QAF distributes to needy families during the holy month.

Paying tribute to Princess Basma for her efforts to alleviate the suffering of the poor and spearheading programmes designed to reduce poverty and unemployment, Mr. Murad said that the commercial sector of the country has always supported non-governmental organisations' services for social and humanitarian causes and will continue to do so in order to promote social solidarity.

Voicing QAF's appreciation to the chamber, the Princess said that the charity campaign is expected to cover all parts of the country. Princess Basma said QAF currently operates 45 centres to provide basic social services to citizens and continually backs the projects of social voluntary and other organisations. Such support, she said, includes training aimed at helping the national effort towards socio-economic development.

The meeting, conducted at QAF headquarters, was attended by QAF board members.

Ramadan is expected to start on Jan. 31.



Wadi Rum (file photo)

Ministry, JEA consider burying electricity cables in Wadi Rum

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministry of Tourism is negotiating with the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) the feasibility of relocating the electricity cables in Wadi Rum after their above-ground installation there last month drew heavy criticism from environmentalists, ministry officials said Monday.

President of Friends of Archaeology Ghazi Saudi said that the installation of electricity poles will destroy the identity and the historic image of Wadi Rum.

"The whole area should be protected, and its nature must not be altered, and we need to preserve the nature and beauty of Wadi Rum," Mr. Saudi told the Jordan Times Monday.

"These electricity poles will destroy the beautiful image of the ancient site for the tourists and visitors," a letter sent recently to the minister of tourism by the Friends of Archaeology said.

Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Mohammad Adwan told the Jordan Times that the ministry appreciated the concerns of environmentalists to protect Wadi Rum saying that "the ministry understands these concerns and has already taken action." "We have already taken the measures in coordination with the Aqaba authority to tackle the problem even before receiving the letter," said Dr. Adwan.

He said that the ministry is trying to find a balance between the local population's requirements for electricity and preserving the special environment of Wadi Rum," Dr. Adwan added.

According to Dr. Adwan, the Aqaba Regional Authority is discussing the issue of visible electric poles in Wadi Rum with the JEA and will study the feasibility of underground cable installation instead of the present option.

"Aqaba authority has already taken the initiative of coordinating this matter with the JEA and we are in total agreement with them on this subject," Dr. Adwan said.

"Budget is the main problem now, because underground cables cost more than double the amount of electric poles," he said.

Dr. Adwan pointed out that it is not too late to re-evaluate the existing project to make it suitable to the environment of Wadi Rum.

But according to a JEA official, the company was contacted neither by the ministry nor by the Friends of Archaeology.

"I don't know until now of any complaints, and we will proceed with the project," Mohammad Smadi told the Jordan Times Monday.

He added that Wadi Rum residents need electricity, "and we were asked to implement an electrical network in that area."

In addition to the electricity problem, Mr. Saudi also cited four-wheel-drive vehicles travelling in the ancient landscape as another problem threatening the area.

"Bedouins and visitors drive freely between these ancient sites without knowing the harm they are causing," he said.

Mr. Saudi suggested restricting vehicles to a specific path in the desert area away from the main sites.

"Wadi Rum's archaeological sites will be distorted in five-years if the area is not monitored and organised planning is not implemented properly in advance," Mr. Saudi said.

One of five main tourist attractions in the Kingdom, Wadi Rum includes more than 70 archaeological locations in its landscape of pinkish rocky mountains eroded by centuries of nature's elements.

Mr. Saudi also referred to the new hotels that are currently being built in Petra, describing them as a "destruction of the ancient site — a mistake to start with."

"The Ministry of Tourism allowed the building of many hotels near Petra, without taking into consideration the environmental problems that will occur as a result," Mr. Saudi said.

Dr. Adwan, however, told the Jordan Times that since his tenure at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the ministry has not issued a single licence to build new hotels in Petra.

"We do not want to overdevelop in tourism, and tourism demands will never be met at a cost to our environment, even if it means less tourism," Dr. Adwan told the Jordan Times, stressing that "we are not after quantitative tourism."

The most important thing, the minister said, is long-term planning for each tourist attraction. Such planning, he said, will take into consideration the infrastructure, services and investment in tourism projects and proper zoning, as well as environmental impact studies and the socio-economic needs of the local community.

Israeli businessmen arrive for trade talks

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A team of 25 Israeli businessmen arrived here on Monday in what an Israeli diplomat described as a familiarisation mission ahead of the expected signing of a Jordanian-Israeli trade agreement in the first half of this year.

It is the first such mission to come to Jordan after the Kingdom signed a peace treaty with Israel in October, ending a 46-year state of war between each other and opening the door to economic and trade cooperation. The two countries opened diplomatic missions in Tel Aviv and Amman respectively on Dec. 11.

Jacob Rosen, the charge d'affaires at the Israeli diplomatic mission here, said none of the visiting businessmen was seeking to sell goods to Jordan. On the contrary, "every one of them is an importer, stockist or distributor, and they would be looking at Jordanian products with a view to importing them to Israel and also to know how Jordanians do business.

"The reality is that neither Israeli nor Jordanian businessmen are familiar with what each can offer," he added in a telephone interview with the Jordan Times.

Mr. Rosen said the delegation's visit was organised by the Israeli Chambers of Commerce, a private sector organisation, and, as such, the visit had little official character. "It is purely a private sector affair in coordination with local businessmen," he said. The delegation, which will leave on Thursday, will be meeting a "few officials" from the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce and Industry but the focus of the mission will be on the private sector.

"The trip will familiarise the businessmen with the Jordanian market ahead of the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli trade agreement in April or May," he said.

The Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty calls for an agreement on economic cooperation to be signed in six months from the date of the ratification of the treaty, thus effectively setting a May 10 deadline after His Majesty King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin exchanged the documents of ratification of the treaty on Nov. 10 in the northern Israeli town of Tiberias.

Contrary to summary assumptions by many that Israeli business would dominate the Jordanian market, seasoned analysts and officials say that trade would be in favour of Jordan since Israel can offer little in terms of large-scale consumer products to the Kingdom at competitive prices while the Kingdom could offer a large variety of such goods to the Israelis.

"True, Israel produces many consumer products, but it cannot offer them at prices that compete with Far Eastern suppliers or Jordanian producers," said a senior official recently. The official noted that cost of production was very high in Israel, restraining flexibility in prices. Furthermore, products in which Israel has a technological edge — computer software, telecommunications equipment and military ware — are not of the type that would interest Jordan.

"Most such Israeli products target the European and American markets, and there is little conflict of commercial interest between Jordan and Israel in such products," added the official, who was briefing local journalists on condition of anonymity.

Market analysts say that it was largely up to the negotiating abilities of Jordanian officials to secure terms favourable to the Kingdom in the proposed economic cooperation agreement. The accord should also not overlap or have any negative impact on the Jordanian-Palestinian economic and trade relationship, they say.

'Plans for nuclear research training centre proceed'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan is proceeding with plans to set up a nuclear research and training centre which eventually would lead to the building of a nuclear reactor hopefully by the year 2000, according to Ali Murr, head of the Atomic Energy Department at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

Mr. Murr told the Jordan Times Saturday that the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been providing Jordan with up to JD300,000 annually in technical assistance since his department began implementing the plan in 1987.

This year the IAEA has agreed to help the department with an additional $500,000 annually for four years in technical aid and equipment, as well as training, Mr. Murr said.

Under the original programme, as approved by the Council of Ministers in 1986, the department conducted studies and drew plans for the implementation of the nuclear research centre programme in two three-year stages, starting 1989 at the cost of JD5 million.

Mr. Murr said his department had received offers to build the centre from Canadian and Belgian institutions, but their high fees led the department to seek the assistance of the IAEA.

The centre, he said, is expected to be located north of Amman.

According to Mr. Murr, the final cost of the project would reach JD13 million, the bulk of which would be borne by the state treasury.

Plans were to set up the centre in 1989, but economic difficulties at the time forced the department to delay the work, added Mr. Murr.

He said the IAEA has so far provided his department with at least $2 million in technical aid over the past few years, helping it to set up an information centre and to train a special cadre to deal with the projected nuclear centre.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Jordan, Iraq review parliamentary affairs

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srour Monday received Speaker of the Iraqi National Assembly Saadi Mahdi Saleh. Mr. Srour and Mr. Saleh reviewed bilateral relations in various fields, with special emphasis on parliamentary affairs. The two also reviewed issues to be discussed by an upcoming meeting of the Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) in Morocco and another meeting by the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) to be hosted by Madrid in March.

PSD personnel head for Angola

AMMAN (Petra) — A group of Public Security Department (PSD) personnel Monday left for Angola to join international peacekeeping forces deployed there. The group was seen off by PSD Director Lieutenant-General Abdul Rahman Udwan who urged the team to persevere in carrying out its duties. Jordan has peacekeeping forces in the former Yugoslavia, Haiti, Cambodia and Mozambique in addition to Angola.

New vehicle licensing rules enforced

AMMAN (Petra) — The Drivers and Vehicles Licensing Department of the Public Security Department (PSD) Monday announced that small passenger vehicles of 1993-95 models will be exempted from mechanical tests at the department when being licensed. In new regulations announced Monday, the department said 1986 to 1992 models with odd plate numbers will be exempted from the tests this year.

Land department collects JD 63.6m in '94

AMMAN (Petra) — Revenues of the Land and Survey Department last month totalled JD 5,001,655 compared to JD 4,868,842 in December 1993, reflecting an increase of 25 per cent, according to Department Director General Ali Gharaibeh. Mr. Gharaibeh said last month's revenues reflected a drop of 15 per cent compared to revenues of the previous month when the department collected JD 5,831,070 in revenues. He said the department collected JD 63,628,785 in 1994; an increase of seven per cent over the previous year when revenues totalled JD 59,023,193.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CUBAN FILM WEEK

☆ Cuban film entitled "El Brigadista" at Instituto Cervantes (the Spanish Cultural Centre) at 5:00 p.m.

POETRY RECITAL

☆ Poetry recital by Dr. Mahmoud Shalabi at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art at 6:30 p.m.

NEWS

☆ ABC News Highlights and McNeil-Lehrer News Hour at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

☆ Exhibition of oil paintings by Mahmoud Musa at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.

☆ Exhibition of works by Mahmud Obaidi at Darat Al Funun. Also showing an exhibition of portraits by Fahrelnissa Zeid and the exhibition of contemporary Arab artists.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Monday addresses senior officials at the Ministry of Higher Education at a meeting with Minister Rateb Saond (Petra photo)

Premier suggests amendments to higher education legislation

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Monday suggested that several amendments be introduced to the law on higher education in order to meet the requirements of the present stage of development in the Kingdom.

Addressing a meeting held at the Ministry of Higher Education, attended by Minister of Higher Education Rateb Saoud, Dr. Majali said that the ministry should coordinate its programmes and plans with the foreign ministry in matters related to the appointment, in order to upgrade the embassies' services, of cultural attaches at Jordanian embassies abroad.

Cultural attaches at these embassies, he added, should be able to project a good image about Jordan's cultural, political, economic and social development to the outside world.

The Jordanian government is seeking to establish an academy to train promising government leaders. This is a plan that is being worked out in cooperation with the United Nations University.

Dr. Saond said in a statement that the prime minister's suggested amendments would be referred to the Lower House of Parliament and would entail plans for further development of the work of cultural attaches at Jordanian embassies.

Dr. Saoud said the prime minister had expressed at the meeting, the view that students with scholarships at Jordanian state universities should receive monthly payments enough to cover the fees as well as living expenses of these students.

The ministry now gives students on scholarships fees and pays them the cost of the books.

The minister said that the idea would be submitted to the Council of Higher Education for approval.

According to the minister, Dr. Majali dwelt on other issues, besides higher education, and reiterated Jordan's need for coordinating with other Arab states on political issues.

He said that the prime minister also reiterated the idea of having the Arab countries put aside their differences and concert their efforts to deal with the challenges that face the Arab Nation in view of the current economic and political blocs being formed elsewhere in the world.

Referring to the peace process, Dr. Majali said that Jordan was seeking to ensure its security, water and territorial rights and improve its economic activity, but will not stop coordinating its efforts with the other Arab states to achieve that goal.

Referring to the refugee problem, Dr. Saoud quoted Dr. Majali as saying that the 1948 refugees will have the right to choose between repatriation to Palestinian land or accept compensation and remain in the Kingdom as Jordanian citizens.

He said the prime minister stressed that Palestinian-Israeli-Jordanian coordination is under way concerning this issue.

11 political parties demand retirement pension equity

AMMAN (J.T.) — Eleven political parties Monday issued a joint statement demanding that the government raise the pensions of the military and civil service personnel on equal footing with the personnel who retired as of December 1994.

On Dec. 17 the government announced pension raises of 25 per cent for military officers, 22.5 per cent for soldiers and 17.5 per cent for government employees, but said that the new rates would apply to those persons who retired as of December 1994, thus excluding personnel who retired prior to that date. Those civil servants and military personnel who retired earlier spent the prime of their lives serving their nation and are facing the same difficult living conditions as their colleagues who only recently retired, said the statement which was signed by the secretaries general of the 11 parties.

The statement demanded that the government demonstrate equity by offering equal pension raises to both categories of retired personnel and that it re-examine the pension scale of the Social Security Corporation (SSC) with a view to increasing those rates.

The parties' statement demanded that the government withdraw its two draft plans on pension raises submitted to the Lower House of Parliament and replace them with two new and more equitable draft plans.

The statement said that if the government fails to withdraw its earlier plans, the 11 parties would demand that the Lower House reject them and request that the government submit new proposals that ensure justice and equality.

Saying that the majority of citizens are now facing difficult economic conditions, poverty and unemployment as well as continuous increases in prices of all commodities, the statement said present wages and salaries are insufficient.

It warned that if the government insists on its present position a serious situation would arise because, injustice would likely create ill-feelings that could threaten national security and stability.

The statement was signed by the Jordan Socialist Arab Baath Party, the Islamic Action Front, the National Action Front, the Jordan Socialist Democratic Party, the Jordan Democratic People's Party, the Jordanian Communist Party, the Jordan Democratic Arab Party, the Jordanian Democratic People's Unionist Party, the Jordan Progressive Baath Party, the Jordan Democratic Progressive Party and the Jordan Constitutional Front Party.

Meanwhile, the Lower House of Parliament Finance and Judiciary committees approved in a joint meeting Monday the government's recent amendments to the military and civil servants pension laws as drafted by the government.

The committees issued a call to the government to raise the pensions of the military and civil service personnel who retired before December 1994. Judiciary Committee Chairman Abdul Karim Al Dughmi said.

Mr. Dughmi, who chaired the joint meeting attended by Finance Minister Sami Gammoh, said his committee was convinced that raising the pensions of those who retired before December could not be included in the two draft laws, but could be considered through a study to be conducted by the government in the future.

The Lower House is also expected to meet Wednesday morning to hear replies by the government to queries raised by several deputies. The House, to meet under the chairmanship of its Speaker Saad Hayel Srour, will refer to its specialised committees amendments to laws on land registration and the division of immovable assets.

North calls for Korean reunification in 1990s

TOKYO (Agencies) — North Korea ruling Workers' Party has called for the reunification of the divided Korean peninsula by the end of the decade, the official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said Monday.

The two Koreas "should accelerate the grand march for reunification by united efforts, put a period to the history of national division and achieve the reunification of the country in the 1990s without fail," it said.

The paper, quoted by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) monitored here, said this should be achieved peacefully on the basis of "independence" and "great national unity" proposed by late North Korean President Kim Il-Sung.

Mr. Kim, who died last July, was quoted as proposing that reunification be achieved by "founding a nationwide unified state which can represent all the members of the nation of all political parties, groupings and social strata."

A reunited Korea should be a confederal state with two regional governments in the North and South, with the existing systems and governments each region left unchanged, Mr. Kim reportedly said.

"Since there exist different ideas and systems in the North and the South of Korea, the reunification of the country must be achieved by the confederacy formula based on one nation, one state, two systems and two governments," Rodong Sinmun echoed.

It added: "To found a nationwide reunified state, a confederal state, is the most correct way of resolving the reunification question independently and peacefully."

The Korean peninsula has been divided since the end of World War II. The split was widened by the 1950-53 Korean War in which the Stalinist North attempted to reunite Korea by force, but was routed by U.S.-led United Nations troops.

North Korea's reclusive leader, Kim Jong-Il, has exchanged New Year's cards with foreign leaders, the KCNA said Monday.

The foreign leaders included Chinese paramount leader Deng Xiaoping and President Jiang Zemin as well as Cuban President Fidel Castro, KCNA said in a dispatch monitored here.

Meanwhile, North Korea's ruling Workers' Party stressed in its Rodong Sinmun journal on Monday that the people's trust in Mr. Kim Jong-Il was "rock-firm."

"Our people's worship of the great leader comrade Kim Jong-Il is the rock-firm trust with which they deeply believe in and follow only their leader, even if the world may change a hnndred times," the party's official newspaper was quoted as saying by KCNA.

It said: "Worship of comrade Kim Jong-Il is the noblest ideological and moral quality of our today."

"Now our people sincerely uphold the great comrade Kim Jong-Il," Rodong Sinmun said, adding that Mr. Kim was the "sun of life" to the North Korean people.

Mr. Kim is expected to be named North Korea's top leader in the near future, following the death of his father Kim Il-Sung last July as president and general secretary of the ruling party.

Meanwhile, the Clinton administration plans to go ahead with an oil shipment to North Korea as part of a deal aimed at halting the North's suspected nuclear weapons programme, a senior U.S. official said.

Anthony Lake, President Bill clinton's national security adviser, said in an interview on NBC Television's Meet The Press that he saw no reason to delay the shipment, which some members of Congress had suggested should be used as leverage with Pyongyang before it released a captured U.S. pilot held for nearly two weeks.

The United States is to provide 50,000 tonnes of heavy fuel oil, valued at about $4.7 million, by Jan. 21 to help offset energy supplies lost as the North begins converting its nuclear programme to one with less potential for building bombs.

Mr. Lake said international inspectors had been able to verify that Pyongyang had frozen the old programme, as required under the bilateral agreement reached in October.

"The North Koreans are abiding by everything that they said that they would do, which is to put... a freeze on their nuclear programme, and I think perhaps to the surprise of some of their critics, to verify it," he said.

"...I think it's in our interests to go ahead and do what we said we would do, which is to proceed with that supply" of fuel oil, he said.

Mr. Lake's remarks were taped Friday, shortly after the North released Chief Warrant Officer Bobby Hall, an army pilot who survived the Dec. 17 downing of his helicopter in the North.

CHAMPAGNE ON CHAMPS-ELYSÉES: Young people spray friends with champagne as they celebrate New Year on the Champs-Elysées near the Arc De Triomphe (background) early Jan. 1. Some 500,000 people gathered on the famous Paris Avenue, which was closed to traffic, to start the new year (AFP photo)

Strike hits Bangladesh capital again

DHAKA (R) — An eight-hour general strike virtually halted life in the Bangladeshi capital Monday, kicking off a new wave of protests by opposition parties trying to push out the government and force early elections.

Opposition leaders claimed the strike, the first of three successive eight-hour stoppages called for Dhaka, was a success and was expected to influence their plans for a more fierce anti-government campaign.

Witnesses said the strike was largely peaceful, although half-dozen people were injured when pickets set off several small home-made bombs.

In addition, some pickets and security officers threw rocks at each other after police tried to break up marches by the opposition activists, they said.

Sheikh Hasina, the Awami League head who led a mass resignation from parliament by opposition party members last week, urged her followers to prepare for even tongher protests to bring down the "corrupt and illegal" government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

"From now on the protests will be relentless," opposition chief whip Mohammad Nasim told reporters. "Now we have only one demand — the departure of Khaleda Zia."

Mr. Nasim spurned Mrs. Khaleda's offer last week to step down one month ahead of elections scheduled for 1996 and hand over power to President Abdur Rahman Biswas so elections could be held freely.

Mrs. Khaleda, whose Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was elected in 1991 in what were billed as the country's first free polls, repeated her offer in a New Year's Day broadcast Sunday.

But, Mr. Nasim said, "the broadcast contained nothing new. So there was nothing to reconsider or rethink about." The opposition wants Mrs. Khaleda to quit now.

There was no transport Monday on the streets of Dhaka except for a few rickshaws, witnesses said. Domestic flights were delayed, trains were mostly idle and some river ferries did not run.

Most businesses were shut and schools rescheduled examinations. The Dhaka Stock Exchange, the country's only bourse, was closed.

Hundreds of riot police imposed tight security in the capital while paramilitary troops guarded important government buildings.

Police said a large number of opposition pickets had poured onto the streets beginning at dawn, but there was little violence.

The strike was extended beyond its original ending time of 2 p.m. (0800 GMT) because transport workers had called a 24-hour countrywide strike Monday to press demands for higher wages and job security, police said.

Journalists in outlying districts said thousands of people had been stranded by the road strike. The government, however, said the road strike was only partial.

Mrs. Khaleda said Sunday: "I am deeply saddened that the opposition parties have resigned from parliament in sheer disrespect of the legislature and have threatened to depose a democratically elected government."

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd was due to arrive in Dhaka Tuesday on a three-day visit. British High Commission sources said the trip had been planned for some time and had nothing to do with Bangladesh's political crisis.

Japan emperor greets year with guarded war references

TOKYO (R) — Japan's Emperor Akihito stood behind a bnlletproof glass screen Monday and told a crowd of well-wishers he wished for peace in 1995, the 50th year since the end of World War II.

Crowds totalling around 70,000 people turned out for seven scheduled appearances by the emperor.

They waved national flags — a red sun on white background — on a bright day in the Tokyo palace.

"At the beginning of the new year, I pray for the happiness of the nation and for world peace," the emperor said, dressed in morning suit and white silk tie.

Most of the crowd were old or middle-aged, but many said they liked Emperor Akihito's open-style reign, involving more foreign trips and domestic tours than his late father Emperor Hirohito.

"We've had three prime ministers in the last year, but the emperor is still here as a symbol of the unity of the Japanese people, said Takashi Sekiguchi, 70, a volunteer who was handing out flags.

"This emperor is different and I like the way he's more open, but I wouldn't want to go too far like the British royals," he said.

In his role as the living symbol of the Japanese, Emperor Akihito also however symbolises their dilemmas and uncertainties, especially as the country grapples with the issues raised by this year's 50th anniversary of the end of the war.

His official New Year's message and poems made cautious reference to the war. But they were a study in diplomatic phrasing and avoided hinting at an official Japanese interpretation of it —why it took place, and who suffered most from it.

"Fifty years ago," he said, "the Japanese people saw the end of a most terrible war, and since then have carried out the difficult task of post-war rehabilitation, and continued to make every effort to improve relations with all countries of the world."

As head of state he cannot say anything that could offend either the victims of Japanese brutality in Asia or conservatives at home who would rather forget — or deny — this and remember only Japanese suffering.

The bnlletproof glass Emperor Akihito stands behind at public appearances reflects how the continued existence of the imperial family after a war fought in the name of his father still rouses enough opposition for left-wing violence to be considered a threat.

One of his traditional New Year's poems was written on a visit to Iow Jima, scene of a brutal battle where 20,000 Japanese and 7,000 U.S. soldiers were killed. The poem simply regretted what had happened as a sad event.

"The valiant men who fought with all their heart and soul, here, unto this day, lie at rest below the ground and the isle is sorrowful."

Another poem seemed to say the war was already a part of history and that time had healed its wounds: "On this isle that once was burned bare by battle-fires, all these 50 years ownerless, the castor plants have gone on growing lushly."

Clinton starts 1995 with seminar on life

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, South Carolina (R) — President Bill Clinton, who had a rough year politically in 1994, spent part of New Year's Day Sunday attending a seminar called "Life 101: What I'll Do Differently in 1995."

But participants said the president did not speak at the session, although he did spend over an hour chatting with friends afterwards.

The seminar was closed to the press as are all sessions at the renaissance weekend, an annual gathering at which prominent Americans gather to discuss public policy and self-improvement.

Mr. Clinton, who has attended renaissance weekends for a decade, usually spends several days at the Hilton Head Island resort on the South Carolina coast, but this year has shortened his trip to just overnight.

During his brief visit, he celebrated New Year's with his family, complete with a round of "Auld Lang Syne," walked on the beach, golfed, jogged, and networked.

At the renaissanee weekend New Year's Eve party on Saturday night, which the president attended, the group had dinner and "there was champagne, but very few people drinking it," said Guy Smith, a spokesman for the conference.

The president also gave a little speech at the party in which he said he looked forward to the coming year. "The tgheme of it was his pride in representing the country," Mr. Smith said.

Mr. Clinton, whose Democratic Party lost control of both the House of Representative and Senate in the recent elections, spoke of how he loved representing the American people, especially at events like the Israel-Jordanian peace treaty signing last October.

Brazil President Cardoso vows to make justice his priority

BRASILIA (R) — Fernando Henrique Cardoso, a one-time political exile and former academic, was sworn in Sunday as Brazil's 38th president vowing to erase hunger and poverty from Latin America's biggest nation.

In his inaugural address, Mr. Cardoso, 63, told a joint session of Congress that his government was committed to carrying out major social and economic reforms.

Social justice "is the major challenge facing Brazil in the final days of this century. This will be the number one objective of my administration," he said.

Mr. Cardoso, a centrist and one of Brazil's most respected intellectuals, took office amid hopes he can consolidate a stabilisation programme he designed during his tenure as finance minister in the government of Itamar Franco.

The economic programme, known as the real plan, tied Brazil's real currency to the U.S. dollar and succeeded in slowing chronic inflation and sparking an economic boom.

"By choosing me... an absolute majority of Brazilians clearly opted for the continuation of the real plan and for the structural reforms which are necessary to do away with the spectre of inflation for once and for all," he said.

Mr. Cardoso said years of misspending and corruption had bankrupted the government, requiring a reorganisation of the public sector.

"It will become necessary to stir up many a hornet's nest before completing our housecleaning and providing the structural reforms that are so necessary if public services are to become efficient," he said.

Mr. Cardoso will press Congress for constitutional reforms to control spending and open up the economy, among the 10 biggest in the world. Brazil faces a budget deficit of at least $10 billion next year.

A spokeswoman told reporters Mr. Cardoso already had prepared a decree to take effect Monday abolishing two ministries and a welfare agency.

Following a religious service at Brasilia's modernistic cathedral, Mr. Cardoso arrived at Congress in a vintage Rolls Royce convertible flanked by a colour guard of lancers in 19th century costume.

Mr. Cardoso later accepted the yellow-and-green presidential sash from Mr. Franco at the presidential palace as low-flying fighter jets thundered overhead and thousands of onlookers cheered.

Brasilia had been drenched by showers throughout the day but as Mr. Cardoso waved to spectators from a palace balcony the clouds cleared and he washed by late-afternoon sunlight.

Mr. Cardoso, a respected sociologist, went into exile during Brazil's 1964-85 military dictatorship. He was a Sao Paulo senator until Mr. Franco tapped him to be foreign minister and became economy minister in 1993.

Mr. Franco left the presidency with a popularity rating of more than 80 per cent, largely because of the success of the real plan. A former vice president, Mr. Franco became president two years ago when his predecessor, Fernando Collor, stepped down amid a corruption scandal.

Franco, 64, drove away from the palace accompanied by his girlfriend, an educator half his age. They are expected to marry and Mr. Franco is likely to become ambassador to Portugal or the Organisation of American States.

British Police probe prison death of alleged serial killer

LONDON (Agencies) — Police Monday probed the jail cell death of suspected serial killer Frederick West, one of Britain's highest-profile prisoners, amidst a political row over security lapses by the prison service.

Mr. West, accused of murdering 12 young women and girls whose bodies were found buried in fields and a home dubbed the "house of horrors", was found hanged in his cell Sunday.

Detectives sought to establish if Mr. West committed suicide or had been killed by one of his fellow inmates — the fate that befell American serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer last month.

Former prisoners at Winson Green Prison in the central English town of Birmingham said the hurly builder, found hnng from the bars of his cell by a makeshift ligature made from his own clothing. was loathed by fellow inmates who "couldn't wait to get at him."

Even members of his own family said on hearing of his death "we hope he rots in hell."

His lawyer Tony Miles said of his client that before his death: "There was nothing in his manner which gave us cause for concern."

Mr. West and his wife Rosemary were accused of murdering nine women and girls whose hodies were found buried in their home in the western English town of Gloucester.

Mr. West was alone accused of three other murders — his first wife, their eight-year-old daughter and the family nanny.

Mr. West's local member of parliament, Douglas French from Britain's ruling Conservative Party, said Monday that Mr. West should have been under 24-hour surveillance.

"This is an enormously high profile case and a very strange case at that and I think it must have always been a possibility that these kind of events could have taken place," he told BBC Radio.

Opposition politicians poured seorn on Home Secretary (Interior Minister) Michael Howard after a disastrous year at the helm of a prison service that suffered riots, arms finds and a mass breakout by Irish Republican Army prisoners.

"There is a real security problem and the home secretary seems complacent about it," said opposition Labour Party prisons spokesman George Howarth.

Judge Stephen Tumim, the inspector of prisons, said the police probe should determine whether Mr. West was under continuous observation and look at what psychiatric examination had taken place.

Judge Tumim in 1992 criticised overcrowding at Winson Green, built in the 19th century to hold 555 men but now holding more than 1,000.

Security experts said Mr. West may have chosen to take his own life when security was lax over the New Year holiday and staff numbers were low during a lunchtime shift change.

Rosemary West, 41, was told of her husband's death within hours. She was being comforted by a nun who had been visiting her in prison. The couple were due to face a pre-trial hearing on Feb. 6.

Families of Mr. West's victims expressed relief Monday about his death in a prison cell where he was found hanged over the weekend.

"This is the only good thing he ever did," said Joan Owen, the mother of 17-year-old Alison, one of 12 young women allegedly killed by Mr. West. "I don't think he will go to hell because you need to have a spirit to go there."

Some of Mr. West's neighbours in the western town of Gloucester, where nine of the corpses were found in early 1994 buried in the garden and under the floor of his terraced home at 25 Cromwell Street, said they also were relieved he was dead.

"I think he deserves everything be got," said one neighbour, adding that Mr. West's death would "save a lot of trouble."

The first discoveries of 25 Cromwell Street's gruesome history were made a day after Mr. West was arrested on Feb. 25 when police began excavations of the site. Officers dug up the garden to discover what are believed to be the remains of Mr. West's 16-year-old daughter Heather, who disappeared in 1987.

Over the following weeks, investigators used a range of sophisticated detector equipment to carry out further excavations of the garden and cellar of the home, dubbed the "House of horror" by the British media, uncovering a gruesome collection of remains from eight other women.

Police stumbled on the case by accident after one of Mr. West's three surviving danghters allegedly denounced him while police were pursuing a routine enquiry into another matter. Until then, neighbours had described the couple as a pleasant pair.

Australia planned to bomb Indonesia, documents show

SYDNEY (AFP) — The Australian government agreed to secret British plans to bomb Indonesia in 1964 if Jakarta had moved to step np attacks on the newly formed Malaysian Federation, according to newly released documents.

Cabinet papers for 1964, declassifying after 30 years Monday, show an entirely different attitude by Canberra towards Indonesia, with which it now enjoys cordial bilateral links extending to friendship between the leaders.

The British plan was aimed at the destruction of Indonesian offensive air and naval capabilities in the event of a major Indonesian attack on the newly formed neighbouring federation.

It was drawn up in response to President Sukarno's attempt to "crush Malaysia" and would have seen up to 170 British, Australian and New Zealand aircraft bombing Indonesia's recently acquired Soviet jet fighters and bombers.

The plan was one of several contingency documents to prodnce a graduated response to the Indonesian policy of military "konfrontasi" designed to destroy the new Malaysia.

Malaysia was then subject to escalating Indonesian confrontation which involved cross border raids into Sarawak.

Britain would have carried most of the action, flying its aircraft from land bases and its four aircraft carriers.

However, Australia could have contributed eight Canberra bombers and 28 Sabre fighters, all based at Butterworth, Malaysia. New Zealand would have contributed six Canberras.

Darwin was envisaged for use by Australian or British aircraft to strike at the more remote Indonesian airfields.

The documents also indicate that Canberra had anticipated retaliation by Indonesia, with air raids or low level commando incursions against the Australian mainland, specifically Darwin.

"In the event of RAAF aircraft in Malaya being used in an offensive role and of Darwin being used to mount air strikes against Indonesia, there will be the possibility of air attacks against Darwin port and airfield or of small sabotage raids," the Cabinet Defence Committee submission said.

Canberra endorsed the plan though the cabinet documents show there were reservations, with cabinet most concerned that there should be adequate consultation before any plan was launched.

The Defence Committee also had an eye to the potential for unintended and drastic consequences.

Commenting on an early plan titled Hemley, the committee said it was possible a limited war would result in Indonesia fragmenting into separate states.

"An early detailed examination should be made therefore of the likely effects of the implementation of Plan Hemley on Australia's future relations with Indonesia as, from the Australian viewpoint, it is highly desirable that the Republic of Indonesia remain a viable entity," it said.

However, despite Indonesia's aggression against Malaysia, the Department of External Affairs believed Indonesia's ambitions were limited and that the major threat to regional security came from Communist China and North Vietnam.

Lawyers: Jackson to appeal plagiarism ruling

ROME (AFP) — Italian lawyers for Michael Jackson said Saturday that the U.S. singer would appeal an "unfounded" court ruling that he plagiarised an Italian song for one of the tracks on his 1991 album "Dangerous". The lawyers said in a statement that Friday's ruling was "completely unfounded because it was given by a judge with absolutely no jurisdiction and in flagrant violation of the findings of experts who indicated that both songs were devoid of all originality." The ruling was "provisional" and "could be revoked and modified by a judge examining the affair in depth, in front of whom the court action should resume," they added. Judge Domenico Bonaccorsi ruled Friday that Jackson had lifted parts of Italian singer Al Bano's "I Cigni Di Balaka" (The Swans Of Balaka) and put them into his own Will You Be There. The Italian song was distributed in the United States from 1989 and had clearly been copied by Jackson, Judge Bonaccorsi said.

Judge tosses out same-sex harassment case

BALTIMORE, Maryland (AFP) — A man claiming his male boss sexually harassed him cannot sue under existing federal sexual harassment laws, according to a judge's ruling. David Hopkins, a former utility company employee, accused his boss Ira Swadow of making unwelcome advances, charges Swadow denied. The federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 does not cover a person claiming to be the "victim of sexual harassment by a supervisor or co-worker of the same gender," U.S. Distict Judge Alexander Harvey ruled Wednesday. And, because Mr. Swadow was equally rude to male and female employees, the sexual aspect of the harassment was removed, Judge Harvey said. Mr. Hopkins said he will appeal the decision and a Maryland anti-discrimination official said the state will continue to pursue same-sex harassment cases under state law.

No-smoking law hurts 'Frisco' hookah house

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — California smokers entered the New Year facing the tonghest statewide restrictions on lighting up in the United States. From Jan. 1, a new California law hans smoking in most indoor workplaces, including restaurants. The only smoking that will be allowed in restaurants is in separate bar areas. But the owner of a Middle Eastern-style cafe in San Francisco, where customers go to smoke hookah pipes, said that when the cafe had to go smoke-free, it could also become customer-free. "People come here to smoke the hookah," Jack Joeanit said. "We don't know what we'll do."

Gold found on queen's Scottish estate — paper

LONDON (R) — Geologists have found gold on Queen Elizabeth's Scottish estate and Prince Charles has joined prospectors in the hunt, a British newspaper said. The tabloid News Of The World, citing geological surveys carried out on the Balmoral estate, said the finds could potentially he worth billions. It could he the second potentially valnable mineral find on land near a royal residence — prospectors plan to drill for oil in the grounds of Windsor Castle, near London. But any royalties from commercial oil production would go into government coffers, not to the monarch.

Welsh pub landlord calls time with his ashes

LONDON (R) — A Welsh landlord who could not bear to be parted from his pub was cremated and his ashes were put in an egg-timer on the bar. Ken Frank's wife Carol, who carried ont her husband's deathbed request, said: "I feel far more contented now he is back in the pub with me." "Some people might think it is macabre, but it was his dying wish," she told Sunday's New Of The World. So, eight months after he died of bone and lung cancer at the age of 54, Frank is now back at the bar of the pied bull in Buckley, north Wales.

هكذا من الأصل

HORSEBACK PATROL: A Chechen volunteer rides a horse as he patrols the streets of the town of Novy Ataguy, some 8-kms south of the capital Grozny. Russian troops launched a massive ground and air assault on the capital after several weeks of bombardments by warplanes to crush the breakaway Caucasus republic's three-year independence drive (AFP photo)

Missile disrupts Sarajevo truce

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — A missile slammed into a Sarajevo hotel Mooday seriously violating an amhitious four-month ceasefire agreed by Bosnia's Muslims and Serbs Saturday.

"It could have been fired hy the Bosnian Serbs hut we can't confirm it," United Nations spokeswoman Captain Miriam Sushaki told reporters.

The shoulder-launched missile hit the seventh floor of the Holiday Inn Hotel in central Sarajevo, Bosnian governmeot liaison officer Edo Memic said. He said the missile was fired from the Serb-held Grbavica district of Sarajevo.

Capt. Sushaki said there were no casualties.

The United Nations said the truce held elsewhere in Bosnia hut the rivals still faced crucial tests and the difficult task of negotiating details to make it work.

The United Nations hoped the accord would pave the way to an early resumption of peace talks on a negotiated settlement of the 33-month conflict.

"Cessation of hostilities is not an end in itself. What it does is provide conditions on the ground so that a oegotiated and fair political settlement could be reached in Bosnia," U.N. spokesman Alexander Ivanko told reporters Monday.

The rivals oow faced a difficult task of negotiating mioute details of the agreement, including opening of roads and disengagement of forces along the 1,600 km (1,000 mile) long confrontation lines with interpositioning of U.N. troops.

Mr. Ivanko said there was no time to be lost.

"Activating all necessary measures to facilitate the modalities for cessation of hostilities is especially important now with the peace momentum taking hold.

"The further both parties will be down the road to peace the harder it will be for them to go back to war," Mr. Ivanko said.

Bot the accord was seriously hreached by the missile attack.

The Serbs have fired several missiles on government huildings over the past few mooths in Sarajevo in a campaign to iotimidate the Bosnian authorities.

U.N. special eovoy for former Yugoslavia Yasushi Akashi (left) and Bosnian Vice-President Ejup Ganic (right) talk in Sarajevo after the signing of a four-month cessation of hostilities with rebel Serh forces (AFP photo)

It was relatively quiet elsewhere in Bosnia Sunday and the United Nations reported Monday on 27 ceasefire violations for which it hlamed both parties almost equally.

Only four ceasefire violations were reported in the northwest Bihac area, U.N. spokesman Colonel Gary Coward said, adding there was moderate fighting in Velika Kladusa.

He said a Ukrainian anti-sniper armoured vehicle came under Bosnian Serb small arms fire along the ootorious sniper alley in Sarajevo Sunday. There were no casualties or damage.

For the Muslim-led government, an important test of Serb goodwill would be the reopening of roads to civilian traffic into Sarajevo.

Mr. Ivanko expected the roads, the so called hlue routes, to be opened soon: "The hlue routes will be opened within the oext few days, possibly even today."

Under the accord, the Serbs have pledged to allow civilian vehicles into the city and free movemeot aod security for the U.N. missioo, demanding in return the Muslim-led government fulfil a promise to withdrew from a demilitarised area on Mount Igman above the capital.

United Nations special envoy Yasushi Akashi said he expected the warring parties to return to the oegotiating tahle within weeks in talks organised hy the five-nation contact group on Bosnia — the United States, Russia, Germany, France and Britaio.

"It is my expectation that very soon, and before the end of the third week of January, negotiatioos aimed at political settlements and a peace treaty will commence under the auspices of the contact group," Mr. Akashi told reporters.

Sarajevo was quiet Sunday after the new ceasefire began at ooon (1100 GMT) hut there was sporadic fighting in the government-held Bihac enclave, a U.N. spokesman said.

Rebel Serbs from Croatia, who have backed an assault on government troops in the Bihac pocket, are supposed to withdraw from the area under the accord. But the Croatian Serbs were not sigoatories to the ceasefire.

U.N. spokesman Edward Joseph told Reuters by telephone from the Bihac enclave that the area remaioed unstahle Sunday.

"At the western confrontation line with the Krajioa Serbs (from Croatia) we registered some explosions in the morning, some artillery and anti-aircraft fire which continued sporadically into the afternoon," Mr. Joseph said.

Mr. Akashi said the new accord differed from receot ceasefires because it called for a separatioo of combatants to be mooitored by U.N. peacekeeping troops.

The U.N. commander in Bosnia, Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose, expressed optimism after he chaired a meeting of Serb and Bosnian military officers to discuss carryiog out the accord.

"We have a very promising start. We covered a lot of ground," Geo. Rose said after the meeting at Sarajevo's U.N.-operated airport.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali described the ambitious accord as "a wonderful New Year's gift" for the people of Bosnia and called for a resumptioo of peace talks.

A leading U.S. politician said that if the ceasefire fails his opposition Repuhlican Party stood ready to push for the lifting of the international arms embargo against the Muslim-led government.

Incoming U.S. Senate Majority leader Boh Dole said Sunday in a television interview arms should be allowed to flow freely to the Muslim-led army "wheoever the ceasefire ends."

Geo. Rose was Monday expected to travel to the eastern city of Mostar oo a mission to secure Bosnian Croat hacking for a four-month nationwide truce.

He said Gen. Rose would meet Kresimir Zuhak, a senior Croat leader and the president of a fledgeling federatioo hetweeo Bosnia's Muslims and Croats.

Fire destroys chamber at Irish peace venue

BELFAST (R) — Fire Monday destroyed the debating chamher in Northern Ireland's old parliament, long a symbol of Protestant dominacon and now the setting for peace talks on ending the province's 25-year-old guerrilla conflict.

Up to 120 firefighters tackled the blaze. "There is nothing to suggest that it is malicious," Fire Brigade spokesman John McLelland said. No one was hurt.

The chamber, where local lawakers sat for forty years, was engulfed in flames that swept through the west wing of the grandiose building that was undergoing a multi-million poond renovatioo.

The flames were first spotted by a police dog handler in the grounds of Stormont Castle.

Last month, British officials opened ground-hreaking talks at Stormont with separate delegations of political representatives from Republican and Protestant extremists.

The exploratory talks, which resume on Jan. 12, follow ceasefires hy rival guerrilla forces involved in a conflict which claimed more than 3,000 lives in the British-ruled province.

A spokesman for Britain's Northern Ireland Office, which administers the region, said smoke was subsiding.

"Being a Bank (pnhlic) Holiday, we have no reports of anyhody being in the hoilding," the spokesman said.

The Northern Ireland parliameot was abolished by London in 1972 when the local administration was unahle to cope with civil strife that broke out in Belfast and other areas.

Stormont, an imposing palace-like edifice of offices and parliamentary committee rooms on a hill overlooking Belfast, has beeo mothballed sioce theo but renovation work has heen carried out recently.

The huilding opened in 1932, ten years after the legislature was created when Northern Ireland became ao autonomous British regioo following the partition of Ireland.

Abandoned Norwegian ship sinks off Dutch coast

AMSTERDAM (R) — A Norwegian cargo ship sank off the Dutch coast Monday after being abandoned by its crew in heavy sea Sunday veoiog, a Dntch Coast Guard spokesman said.

Meanwhile, the search was continuing for two German lifeboatmen who fell overboard during a separate rescue operation Sunday, but hopes of finding them were fading.

And a Danish ferry hit by stormy weather in the North Sea was steaming slowly home Monday. It was expected to dock Tuesday, some 48 hours behind schedule.

The 1,179 DWT Norwegian freighter Linito sank about two miles from the Dutch North Sea island of Vlieland. No decisions had yet been made about salvaging the vessel, but it did not pose a danger to other ships, the Coast Guard spokesmao said.

The Linito's five-man crew abandoned ship after its cargo of marble shifted and caused it to list sharply. They were later picked up by a passing Swedish ship.

The two missing Germans were aboard the rescue vessel Alfried Krupp, which had been helping to search for a Dutch sailor who fell overboard but was later rescued by helicopter.

The Coast Guard spokesman said a British ship, the Forthbank, which had also reported difficulties after its cargo shifted, had overcome its prohlems and was continuing its voyage.

Conditions off the Dutch coast had improved, hnt the wind was still strong and the sea still choppy, he added.

Heavy weather had forced the Daoish ferry Dana Anglia, with 639 passengers and 100 crew on board, to reduce speed to a minimum, a spokesman for DFDS Scandinavian Seaways said in Copenhagen Monday.

Walesa wants Olechowski to keep Foreign Ministry

WARSAW (R) — Polish President Lech Walesa said Monday he wanted Foreign Minister Andrzej Olechowski, who resigned last week, to keep the post until a presidential election later this year, the government's press office said.

Mr. Walesa told Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak at a routine weekly meeting he also wanted a speedy nomination for his candidate for the long-vacant post of defence minister.

"The president demanded the appointment of his candidate for defence minister and that Minister Olechowski be kept in his post until the end of the presidential term," the government said in a statement following the meeting.

The presidential election is due in the third quarter of this year.

The statement said Mr. Pawlak asked Mr. Walesa, fighting with the ruling left-wing about power-sharing, to find a compromise on key issues, such as the budget.

"The prime minister put forward a proposal to list issues of key importance for society and the country which should not be an object of political fighting," the statement said.

But Mr. Walesa has accused the left-wing coalition of trying to take away much of his powers, and said his demands on the Defence and Foreign Affairs ministries would have to be met first before he discussed the question of compromise.

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Time for shale oil

THE BEGINNING of the new year is a good occasion to tap additional avenues for the country by generating new economic opportunities. What comes to mind in this context is the still unexplored use of shale oil in generating energy due to the uneconomical cost of its production. This state of affairs has rendered the production of fuel from shale oil deposits in the country unviable even though the oil deposits are huge and promise bundles of new revenues for Jordan. Recently two oil companies in Alberta, Canada, have found new ways for extracting oil from sand or tar oil deposits that made production not only feasible but even profitable. This could be interesting news for the Kingdom which has not found ways and means to commercialise shale oil use.

The novel ways developed by two large Canadian oil companies operating in the Fort McMurray area in northern Alberta do not depend on new technologies as such. Rather they rely on more efficient procedures for mining that in their cumulative results reduce cost of production to a mere $12 per barrel. Against the backdrop of nearly $18 per barrel market price, the new cost has indeed rendered the production of fuel from shale oil profitable and economical. The Canadian experiment promises also to lower the price of production to even less than $10 per barrel within three years. But the most promising aspect about the new production technique is the availability of the technology which can be transferred worldwide at a minimum price. Thanks to this new extraction procedure, Alberta now produces more than one quarter of its annual energy needs from shale oil instead of relying on a more conventional source of fuel.

We believe that Jordan can duplicate the Canadian success story since we happen to have huge deposits of shale oil that have not been explored due to the assumption that their exploration would not be feasible. Jordan's economic fortunes stand of course to expand to new horizons should we embark on developing those deposits. To this end, we suggest that Jordanian experts be dispatched to Canada to examine the new production technique. Both the Canadian embassy in Amman as well as our own embassy in Ottawa could lend valuable support to this venture. Given the steady constraints on our national economy, the sooner we succeed in exploring new avenues for increasing national revenues the better it would be for the country and its people as a whole.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

IT IS rather disappointing to see the Arab League secretary general Monday starting a tour of only three Arab states in the Gulf and claiming that he was planning to prepare the ground for reconciliation among Arab states, said Al Dustour daily Monday. Esmat Abdul Meguid is scheduled to visit Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates only and does not plan to make other visits to the rest of the Arab states, which the Gulf countries consider their enemies, said the paper. This is no way for ending divisions among Arab countries and no way of reestablishing solidarity among Arab states to face the coming stage, which would usher in new challenges at the domestic and the external fronts, added the daily. We are deeply sorry and astonished to hear Mr. Abdul Meguid announces that his visit will be confined to the three Gulf states when he claims that he seeks to reestablish solidarity, which entails visits to most Arab countries and hearing their views concerning inter-Arab affairs, said the daily. The paper said that it is hoped the Arab League secretary general would not confine his mission to a selected number of Arab states and would take the initiative and work towards ending divisions in the Arab World.

1995 IS the year of exposing the real intentions of the Israeli government which started the new year with plans for expanding Jewish settlements and building new ones on Arab land, said Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer in Al Ra'i daily. 1995 should expose Israel's real intentions towards releasing the Arab detainees, holding elections in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, declaring plans for withdrawal from the occupied territories and starting plans for withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Heights, said the daily. The writer said that while the Israeli authorities are showing very adamant stands concerning the Jewish settlements, they are still holding on to their positions concerning the withdrawal from the Syrian territories with no sign of an easing of the situation or flexibility that could pave the ground for genuine peace. The writer expressed the view that an Arab summit meeting to discuss the question of peace with Israel has become necessary and that Israel should be made to succumb to the requirements of the United Nations resolutions before any normalisation of Arab-Israeli relations can take place.

The View from Fourth Circle

By Rami G. Khouri

The truth of power and possession in Palestine

THE SUDDEN confrontation between the Israeli government and the Palestine National Authority (PNA) over the construction of new homes at the Israeli settlement at Ephrata, south of Bethlehem, may be the catalyst required to bring us to the historical hour of reckoning that we have long anticipated but always feared. The issue may reveal if Israelis and Palestinians will be able to live together in justice and peace, but it may also show if the Palestinian people have any bargaining power whatsoever with the Israelis.

The settlement controversy may either push the peace negotiations forward to success, or see them self-destruct on the shoals of their own imagined, but false, successes. It is hard to see the issue being resolved with yet another of the magic mirrors compromises that have characterised the peace talks to date, for several important reasons: the credibility of Yasser Arafat and the PNA is too thin today to withstand yet more humiliating concessions to Israel, and the nature of this dispute — land — goes right to the heart of the whole, century-long nationalistic confrontation in Palestine.

The PNA, uncharacteristically, has reacted forcefully to the settlement issue, threatening to allow the peace process to collapse if the disputed settlement is built. This is not surprising, given the nearly desperate posture of Yasser Arafat and the PNA. They have suffered the triple humiliation of being treated in a consistently condescending manner by Israel and Western donors, of being challenged at home by Hamas and others, and of being ignored, if not virtually abandoned, by the majority of Arab governments.

All of this has happened because Mr. Arafat and the PNA have implemented the promise of the Oslo peace accord with a level of political and economic incompetence that has been as flagrant as it has been disappointing (it was irresponsible of Mr. Arafat to try to play off Jordan and Egypt as two fair-weather friends, and it was a very bad sign for Mr. Arafat to make his first priority in Palestine the establishment of five or six different internal security agencies); the Israelis, for their part, have implemented the peace accord with a level of arrogance and racism that has sapped the PNA of much of its initial credibility.

In the year and a half period from September 1993 to January 1995, the easy, symbolic things have been done. They have been shown to be purely symbolic, though, with little or no impact on the real quality of life of most Palestinians. Consequently the majority of Palestinians today are sceptical about the peace process (and the majority of other Arabs are probably equally sceptical about the prospects of peace and normalisation with Israel).

The single most dominant message of the contemporary peace process, from Madrid until now, is the affirmation and institutionalisation of Israeli principles and goals, while the attainment of Arab rights appears to be a subsidiary endeavour, often brutally conditional upon our official Arab acceptance and ratification of the dictates of Israeli mythology, theology and psychology.

Now, the time for symbols is over. The time has come to get down and resolve the hard, basic facts of the confrontation between two nationalisms in Palestine: Whose land is this? Who can exercise sovereignty in Jerusalem? What are the natural, sustainable, mutually satisfying relationships among Jews, Christians and Muslims in Palestine and the wider Middle East? What is the fate of Palestinians who left Palestine in 1948?

The Oslo accord left these issues to a later stage, to be negotiated starting in 1996. But this week's settlement controversy has shown that the core issues in this historic conflict cannot be left unresolved any longer. As the daily life conditions of millions of Palestinians worsen in Palestine and elsewhere in the region, and as a deadly combination of frustration, humiliation, anger and despair gnaws at Palestinians and other Arabs because of their self-perceived state of weakness, the delay in addressing the core issue of who owns the land of Palestine now works against the prospects of implementing the Oslo peace accord in a manner that would satisfy both sides.

There is a huge risk in addressing today the final status issues such as land and water, the Israeli settlements, Jerusalem and the status and rights of refugees. But there is probably a greater risk in leaving these issues unresolved, because the existing status quo merely reinforces Palestinian sentiments of vulnerability and Israeli sentiments of superiority that both work together to kill the prospects of peace as they are envisaged under the Oslo accord.

It is important to make one more decisive effort to implement the Oslo accord in a manner that achieves justice and peace for both sides, and not only for the Israelis. If the Oslo plan proves to be nothing more than a flowed and cruel dream, then the honourable thing to do for the Palestinian leadership would be to declare it a failure and to call for a meeting of the Palestine National Council to accept the resignation of Yasser Arafat, to elect a new leadership and to decide future strategy.

This would also have political repercussions in other Arab lands, including Egypt and Jordan, where peace treaties have been signed with Israel but the struggle over normalisation remains ongoing. It would be very awkward for Egypt and Jordan to attempt further normalisation in a context of collapsing negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis and of continuing Israeli colonisation of Palestinian lands.

The resolution of the Ephrata settlement dispute will help determine which scenario occurs — further implementation of the Oslo accord, or its collapse. We should not fear this moment. The truth about the realities of power and possession of land in Palestine must be known. If the Ephrata settlement dispute shows that Israelis value the land of Palestine more than they value coexistence with the Palestinians, the Palestinian people in turn will have to decide their appropriate political response.

Patience, trust and hope have won the day among Palestinians until now, but they cannot prevail for very much longer in the face of a bitter reality composed of Israeli bulldozers, Arab silence and international acquiescence in equally brutal national disasters in Bosnia and Chechenya.

M. KAHIL

Israel's choice: Palestinian statehood or chaos

By John Whitbeck

THE VIOLENCE in Israel and Palestine this autumn and the dramatic and dangerous discrediting of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in he eyes of many Palestinians have not occurred in a vacuum. The glacial pace of financial assistance and economic progress is not the only — and perhaps not even the principal — cause of Palestinian disillusion and despair.

Those who were sceptical of or frankly opposed to the Declaration of Principles waited about a year to see whether Israel really had undergone a moral, spiritual and psychological transformation towards recognising Palestinians as human beings entitled to basic human rights or whether such a transformation might occur as momentum towards peace developed. They have seen nothing to suggest that their worst fears were not fully justified.

Israeli statements and acts since the sunny ceremony on the White House lawn in September 1993 could lead even the most hopeful and optimistic of Palestinians to conclude that this "peace process" really is a trick and a trap, that Israel has no intention of agreeing to even their minimum demands (an independent Palestinian state in the Palestinian lands occupied in 1967 with some share of sovereignty over Jerusalem) and that Israel seeks simply to achieve separate peace deals with its other Arab neighbours, thereby acquiring a free hand to complete the transformation of Palestine into Israel, the definitive destruction of Palestinian dreams for some measure of justice and the "ethnic cleansing" of the Palestinian people. U.S. President Bill Clinton's recent speech in the Knesset, in which he pledged heart-felt, unconditional and religiously required allegiance to a foreign country without once mentioning the word "Palestinian," cannot have helped.

If one accepts the grim view of Israeli intentions and American irrelevance — and it is certainly not irrational to do so — then it is not irrational to ride a suicide bicycle into an Israeli military checkpoint. Even an atheist could conclude that such acts, desperate but unquestionably courageous, offer the best hope of giving dignity and meaning to a life which otherwise offers neither dignity nor meaning nor hope.

The threatened demise of the "peace process" is particularly tragic since it could be averted if the Israeli government would only state clearly what it surely must know to be true and what even the Israeli opposition has said out loud: that the Declaration of Principles makes a Palestinian state inevitable. Realistically, what options will Israel have when it eventually sits down with the Palestinians to negotiate a permanent settlement? Most broadly, there might seem to be three — making the status quo permanent, asserting (for the first time) Israeli sovereignty over the occupied territories beyond expanded East Jerusalem or accepting Palestinian sovereignty over the Palestinian lands occupied in 1967 (with some agreed formula for sharing Jerusalem).

The status quo is "belligerent occupation," a status which, as a matter of international law, is inherently temporary but which can be maintained indefinitely as long as the military force and political will to maintain it exist. However, it is logically and legally inconceivable that such an inherently temporary status could be made "permanent." The status of "perpetual belligerent occupation" does not exist. A major virtue of the Declaration of Principles is to require the negotiation of some permanent status solution within an agreed time-frame.

If Israel asserted sovereignty over the occupied territories, it could either provide or deny the full rights of Israeli citizenship to those who live there. If it took the former course, Israel would be renouncing Zionism and negating its *raison d'etre*. If, however, it took the latter course, leaving the disenfranchised indigenous people to rot in "autonomous areas," "reservations" or "black spots," without even the option of "independent homelands," it would be creating a system and a state more heinous and blatantly racist than South Africa at the height of apartheid.

Since the Palestinian people could never accept such an outcome (even if some future Palestinian "leadership" might be induced to sign a document), it would have to be imposed by force. No country other than the U.S. could possibly support such a neo-apartheid solution. Far from achieving acceptance in its region, Israel would replace the old South Africa as the world's ultimate pariah state. Is this really an option which Israelis would wish to implement or even to contemplate?

The only viable option

Logically, only one viable option remains — accepting Palestinian sovereignty in the Palestinian lands occupied in 1967 subject to an agreed formula for an equitable sharing of a physically undivided Jerusalem. It is high time for Israeli leaders to stop pretending that the earth is flat and to actually lead by telling their people clearly and honestly that Palestinian statehood is essential if a lasting peace in the Middle East is ever to be achieved and is thus fundamentally in the interests of Israel and Israelis.

The Declaration of Principles states that negotiations on permanent status issue such as Jerusalem, refugees, settlements and borders (that is, negotiations about peace) "will begin as soon as possible" but not later than May 1996 (presumably on the grounds that it would be "impossible" to begin them sooner) and will then drag out at least until the May 1999 deadline for their conclusion, while Israel uses this time to create further "facts on the ground" in its favour.

It would be profoundly short-sighted for Israel to do so. If Israel truly seeks peace, it should start negotiating "as soon as possible" the issue which it must ultimately confront — how the state of Palestine (already recognised by 124 other sovereign states encompassing the vast majority of mankind) and its relationship with the state of Israel can be structured so as to serve the interests of both Israelis and Palestinians and so as to enhance Israeli security and the quality of Israeli lives, so that a majority of Israeli can at last recognise that it is in their own interest to accept Palestine's right to exist in peaceful coexistence alongside Israel. Peace is unimaginable on any other basis.

Actually, there is one other alternative to Palestinian statehood — chaos and an explosion of frustration and violence on a scale previously unimagined. This explosion will not wait until 1999 if Israel does not soon make clear that the "peace process" is leading to a destination which Palestinians are likely to prefer to an honourable martyrdom.

John V. Whitbeck is an international lawyer in Paris. His "Two States, One Holy Land" framework for peace was the subject of a three-day conference of 24 Israelis and Palestinians held in Cairo in November 1993. This article is reprinted from Middle East International.

LETTERS

It is difficult to be apolitical

To the Editor:

PASCAL KARMY'S article "Palestinian Refugees — Who's to blame?" (Jordan Times, Dec. 18) ventured to comment on Erskine Childer's work in the 1960s and on David Hirst's "The Gun and the Olive Branch" work in the 1970s. I can say that David Hirst personally collected background source material from the archives of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) research centre in Beirut, the centre I will refer to later on. These two works, Childer's and Hirst's were truly painstakingly trying to right a wrong or a series of wrongs in a situation in which they had no personal involvement.

However, in the case of Palestinian scholar Walid Khalidi, examining the opened archives of Arab governments, contemporary Arabic newspapers and the radio monitoring reports of both the BBC and CIA, the same material being deposited and open to all readers at all levels at the PLO research centre in Beirut; examining archives and records duplicated in Walid Khalidi's non-profit organisation known as the Institute of Palestine Studies, rebutting and refuting arguments since the late 1950s or 1959 to quote your article, has not made its impact on the political life of the Palestinians. We have gone from "bad to worse" to quote Dr. Walid Khalidi in a recent speech delivered to an Arab club in Athens, and televised this year on Jordan TV. The subject was the pros and cons of the Oslo agreement.

What matters now is the Oslo agreement; and the primary sources, PLO and PLO related officials, who will implement it, along with whatever bearing the other agreements between Israel and its neighbours might have, especially the neighbours hosting refugee camps. It does not matter what the scholars think now or 10 years from now. In general, the Palestinian intellectuals have never assumed a close relationship to the Palestinian people, acting as backseat drivers.

Dr. Khalidi's scholastic achievements are mainly in the nature of compiling, and reprinting documents, archive material and photographs through a non-profit organisation. He might have tried to contribute more analysis by spending some days, weeks, months or perhaps years' work close to the Palestinian camps to understand the life of a refugee, the refugee who could not afford to buy his publications at organisational prices, had not they been available through PLO facilities.

I had the privilege of being related to a one-time primary source. My father, the late Hussein Fakhri Al Khalidi who was secretary of the Arab Higher Committee in 1948. He was the first official on the scene of Deir Yassin massacre. He wrote many memoranda and reports, gave press releases, memoirs and is well-archived in Palestinian history both under the mandate and later. He remained a public figure and an elder stateman, who was dedicated to the cause and the land. He remained at home in Jerusalem and Jericho until passing away in 1962. I wonder if Dr. Walid Khalidi through his painstating research, had come across his name. I would have been happy to be informed.

Since then (after 1962) my family and I have chosen our own "modus vivendi." From where I sat, I was in a position to collect and read Palestinian achievements in all fields. We collected all pertinent material, and made it available to all interested parties at the PLO research centre in Beirut. I can safely assume that the Palestinian intellectual university professor is bound by force of habit to lecture and instruct. It is the Palestinian intellectual who ventured into civil service, humanitarian or camp-relief work who deserves the credit. Whatever achievements they left unpublished remained in the burnt out office building which they called home and from which they constantly relocated. We can probably see these achievements surfacing, in Israeli and other people's archives.

May be the next generation of Palestinians, "the large kindergarten" as Shimon Peres put it in his Nobel Prize Award speech this past month, should attend schools, should take in the advice and lectures and instructions, and then choose to reverse their course. To me it is difficult to remain carelessly apolitical, when everyone authorised or not, comments on my past, my future, and that of my children and grandchildren's location and relocation.

Leila Khalidi,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

هكذا من الأصل

A law unto themselves

Russia's Chechen problems are not unique. At times, all states must enforce order, says Vincent Cable

Chechen soldiers take positions in a trench next to a road leading to Grozny (AFP photo)

THE SIGHT of tanks rolling into the rebellious Caucasian republic of Chechenya in the past week has caused many in the West finally to give up on the new Russia, seeing in these events a bullying superpower heralding the end of democracy. But such emotional reflexes do not do justice to an issue of fundamental importance: the role of order in societies making the transformation towards liberal capitalism. President Boris Yeltsin expressed the problem in his televised speech to the nation on Tuesday Dec. 28: "The longer the situation in the Chechen republic goes on, the greater the destructive effect on Russia's stability. I want to assure all Russian people... law and order will be restored in Chechenya."

Russian liberal reformers are divided; one group, led by Yegor Gaidar, forming a bizarre alliance with the communist against President Yeltsin; another, including Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, defending him and the need to use force. But leaving aside personalities, and the tactical merits of armed intervention, a broad issue of principle is also at stake: the need for all societies, including those aspiring to liberal values, to be able to impose the rule of law.

What is emerging from the ideological debris of the cold war in many countries is the outline of a system of governance which can best be described as anarcho-capitalism. Societies are emerging — not just in Russia and the former Eastern bloc, but also in China and some potentially powerful countries such as India and Indonesia — which are highly entrepreneurial and economically dynamic but where the "rule of law" is precarious and large-scale disorder is not far below the surface. While there are some big and important differences in these countries' political models — from democratic India to authoritarian China — there is a shared dilemma: how to dismantle overcentralised, inefficient, state-dominated systems in the name of liberalisation, without simultaneously opening the door to widespread lawlessness secession and fragmentation; how to create greater economic and political freedom without allowing the authority of the state to collapse.

This is a dilemma which the West fails to understand, indulging, with some naivety, in the belief that "good governance" is a cocktail of market reform and democratic elections. The role of law and order in this process is left studiously vague (except where foreign investors need law and law enforcement).

Part of the problem is that the West has inherited a system of rules-based capitalism resting on the rule of law (with a few partial exceptions, such as Italy). Those few non-Western countries — all in East Asia — that have been highly successful economically have all placed a high premium on order. It was achieved in Japan with the help of a strong sense of social cohesion, in Taiwan and Korea with ruthless state power, at least initially, and in Hong Kong through colonial government. All of this has been rationalised in terms of something called Confucianism, which is in fact a rather fancy way of encompassing several different systems which had in common a strong emphasis on social discipline and order. The point is that without order and stability, sustained development was not possible.

In anarcho-capitalist states, these conditions do not yet hold and are having to be created. In the particular case of countries where law and order were equated with failed communism, such as Russia, the concept of the rule of law is having to be reinvented, and in a hurry.

This presents two serious problems: how to create systems of commercial practice which inspire trust and enable capitalism to work and how to create efficient and stable forms of devolution which allow for local decision-making.

As to the first, Westerners are largely able to take for granted that their food and drink are not adulterated, that contracts and proof of ownership will be respected, that fraud is untypical, that judges, police and fire services do not have to be given bribes to perform their jobs, and that banks and insurance companies are no longer run, as in Dickens' time, like Mr. Montagu Tigg's Anglo-Benglace Company. There are, of course, many abuses, but institutions exist to provide regulation and remedies.

Under anarcho-capitalism, these things cannot be assumed. Legal principles are ill-defined, public institutions are weak and enforcement is capricious. A certain amount of anarchy may not matter. Some big Asian countries such as China, Indonesia, Thailand and India are achieving considerable economic success under these conditions. The lesson which has to be drawn, and is reflected in the advice of Western institutions, is that priority should be given to financial stability and to the freeing of markets (which has the beneficial by-product of reducing the artificial scarcities which fuel corruption).

Yet a narrow economic agenda fails to capture the depth of the problem, especially in post-communist societies. Adam Smith, who was always sceptical about governments having more than a minimalist role, nonetheless made major exceptions of "peace" and "the tolerable administration of justice." Without these, there is no personal security and no sense of fairness. It is possible for the state to be too weak, as well as too strong.

Such weakness can be seriously debilitating. In the extreme case of Russia, organised crime is all-pervasive. And many people's first experience of financial investment has been through scams like the collapsing pyramid selling company MMM. In India, where there is a much more long-standing sense of the rule of law and a vigorous democracy, a point has nonetheless been reached where some state (provincial) governments have been subverted by organised crime, and there is widespread cynicism about the decay of institutions. In China the emergence of a more liberal economic regime has been associated with widespread lawlessness, corruption and fraud (problems that are more pervasive than political dissidence). The Chinese have tried to reestablish order by exemplary punishments, including public executions (in much the same way as occurred in similar circumstances in the late 18th and early 19th-century Britain). Indeed the appeal of the Chinese authoritarian "model," not least in Russia, rests on the ability of the authorities in what is now a capitalist society, to combine growth with at least a minimum of order.

This is the broad context within which events in Russia have to be seen. In particular, liberal reformers have to meet the challenge of lawlessness posed by autonomous local baronies, of which Chechenya's is simply the most flagrant. Otherwise, economic and political liberalisation will be seen as contributing futher to the unravelling of Russia's remaining central authority.

Devolution has to be managed without fragmentation and separatism. The problem is not unique to Russia. Each of the big, heterogeneous countries now in the process of liberalisation and transformation — notably Russia, China, India and Indonesia — faces numerous local demands for "self-determination," including outright independence.

In India such challenges have been met by allowing devolution within a federal structure but without conceding independence. While political subtlety and democratic processes have played their part, force has also part of the equation.

The Punjab, for example, has returned to near-normality thanks to a combination of tough counter-insurgency measures allied to political compromise. And after all, the world's most successful liberal democracy, the U.S., had to suppress the secession of its of its Southern states in a particularly brutal civil war. It is difficult to see why greater pacifism should be demanded of those who rule the new Russia (or for that matter China and other states fending off incipient anarchy).

These events pose a challenge of understanding to the West (including an undertaking of its own history). Many countries, especially former communist countries, are redefining the role of the state to establish more liberal systems of governance. What they have created, at least transitionally, is a sort of anarcho-capitalism which is dynamic and unstable. Managing this instability — creating order and the rule of law — is, not surprisingly, extremely difficult. It may well require the judicious use of force. For the West to act, or speak, as if such action heralded a return to the methods of the Soviet Union would be dangerously wrong-headed.

The writer is head of the International Economics Programme at the Royal Institute of International Affairs. This article is reprinted from The Independent.

Oblivion for communist relics

By Sandra Lacut
Agence France Presse

VIENNA — The gigantic statues of communist times in Eastern Europe have been relegated to museums, hidden away in deep cellars, or sold to collectors in the five years since the Iron Curtain tumbled down.

Dozens of busts of Lenin and Stalin in Poland have been exiled with those of Marx and Engels to a former country house at Kozlowka in the east of the country — a veritable museum of "true socialism."

There are monumental statues of anonymous workers, portraits of communist leaders surrounded by children, and anti-capitalist propaganda illustrations showing Westerners as satyrs.

One statue, however, is missing from the line-up: that of Felix Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Cheka, the political police which eventually became the KGB. The statue stood for 40 years in central Warsaw, until Nov. 17, 1989, when it was smashed to bits to the applause of onlookers, who carried fragments home with them as souvenirs of the fall of communism.

Meanwhile, in the Hungarian capital Budapest, there is an open-air museum for 50 statues in a suburban park.

Residents in the district have complained so much about the sight of those vestiges of communism that the mayor has had trees planted along the park fencing to block them out of view.

And Pragne's "pink tank," first parked in the city centre after 1945 in homage to the Red Army's liberation of Czechoslovakia from the Nazis, has finally been taken away to an army museum after being repainted in its original regulation khaki.

When Soviet troops returned in 1968 to crush the Prague Spring movement, the tank became a symbol of that repression. A student first painted the tank pink in 1991. Later the same year, some members of parliament did the same, applauded by the crowds who drowned out protests by some apologists of the old regime.

Most Czech towns have now discreetly stashed their communist relics in cellars and brought out statues of the president of the first Czechoslovak republic, which lasted from 1918 to 1938, Tomas Masaryk.

He has become a cult figure in the past few years, largely under the influence of the Czech Republic's dissident playwright turned President Vaclav Havel.

At Karlovy Vary, a Bohemian resort much appreciated by Soviet dignitaries, a statue of the cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space, has been moved from the town centre to the airport.

In Romania, in the general hysteria which swept through the population when Nicolae Ceaucescu and his wife Elena tried to flee and were executed on Christmas day 1989, most of the printed speeches of the dictator were burned. An immense statue of Lenin in central Bucharest was dismantled in 1990. What happened to the many busts and portraits of Ceaucescu remains a big secret.

One fashionable restaurant, keen to attract tourists and little concerned about ideological overtones, has relics of Lenin and the "little Stalin of the Carpathians" — as Ceaucescu is known — keeping watch over diners.

A new vodka has justed appeared on the market, named after Ceaucescu and sold in bottles looking like him.

For their part, Bulgarians have had trouble trying to dismantle their communist monuments, because of technical problems.

There have been several unsuccessful attempts in the capital Sofia on the mausoleum of communist leader Georgy Dimitrov, erected in 1949 on a central square. Plans to turn it into a cafe, or more fittingly, a pantheon, have come to nothing. It is still in place, covered with anti-communist graffiti.

Throughout Eastern Europe, another way to dispose of the unwanted memorials has been to sell them to Western collectors, and sometimes to locals who hanker after the old days.

When hundreds of personal possessions of Hungary's former number one, Janos Kadar, were auctioned in Budapest last year, one Western buyer paid $130,000 for a watch bearing the likeness of his then Soviet counterpart, Leonid Brezhnev.

Syria: changing with the times

By Mariam M. Shahin
Special to the Jordan Times

DAMASCUS — On a road outside Damascus, away from the bustling streets and the smoggy skies of Syria's capital, lies the secret to the country's future. Factory after factory line the gravel roads leading to the northern cities of Allepo and Homs. The economic benefits of the yet-to-be concluded peace between Syria and Israel are already in the making.

In the aftermath of the 1991 allied war against Iraq, Syria began to pave the way for an economic recovery after decades of "malaise". Syria was one of more than half a dozen Arab countries to join the 33 nation alliance against Iraq. In return Syria earned the gratitude and economic support of the Gulf states, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

In the interlude between the war's end in March and the beginning of the Madrid peace talks in October the government of President Hafez Al Assad introduced the now famous Law 10.

The law is designed to allow for the import of a wide variety of goods as well as for facilitated exports and manufacturing, all of which had been previously forbidden. A special tax incentive makes imports and exports, which circulate under the auspices of Law 10, exempt from taxes and tariffs for five to seven years.

While prior to Law 10 the government used to publish lists of products that the private sector was "allowed to produce" it now publishes a list of what only the "government can produce". Today the list of "government produced products" includes no more than 20 items-one of which is toothpaste.

Law 10 paved way for return of nearly $4 billion of an estimated $60 billion in expatriate holdings. Amir Sankar, a prominent Damascene businessman and member of the board of management for industrial affairs of the Omar Sankar's Sons Co., is one Syrian whose family has invested $10 million in the Syrian economy since the introduction of Law 10.

As Mercedes Benz dealers and owners of tomato paste and jam factories, the Sankar's are one of dozens of Syrian family conglomerates to have pooled their wealth to enable business ventures to grow and prosper.

While Dr. Sankar refuses to talk numbers, he says that the families $10 million investment is expected to pay back in five to seven years. Exports to the Gulf countries, Jordan, Iran and Egypt are already underway and ways to enter the European as well as the North American and South American markets are under study. "Once the European governments and subsidies to their indigenous agricultural sector — they will took to other producers," says Mr. Sankar in the belief that Europeans will turn to countries like Syria for cheaper canned and frozen agricultural produce.

"We already have agents for both the U.S. and Europe and are looking for agents in South America as well," says Dr. Sankar, saying that Syria can tap the both economic markets as well as its large expatriate communities abroad.

Law 10, says Dr. Sankar was designed to allow both Syrian capital abroad to flow back into the country as well as to encourage foreign investment. "Foreign companies have not yet started investing in Syria but that is natural. They are waiting to see if Syrians can make a go of the economy — once they see that we can the foreign capital will begin flowing in."

The broadened participation of the private sector investors has fostered a privately run public transportation system which is cheaper, more wide ranging and more ecologically sound. "There are more destinations for basically the same price as before and the mini-buses that replaced the large old buses are newer, cleaner and don't pollute as much," said Mahmoud Taher, driver of one of the tens of thousands of Japanese and European made mini buses which provide transport to most of the Syrian population.

Old American and French cars that once crowded Damascus streets, are being replaced by the shiny new look of Japanese, Korean and German automobiles.

But Syrian businessmen are pushing for even greater changes. Among their desired goals are the reestablishment of a stock exchange and the opening of private and foreign banks. Banks and many new private companies were nationalised in the 1960s. A reopening of banks would allow for the smaller entrepreneurs to get a "piece of the pie" and would allow for the market economy to have a larger middle class base.

While the privatisation of the public transport sector has provided a change in the life of the average Syrian, not all of the recent changes have.

"The freer export and import climate has not entirely filtered down yet," admits mega investor Sankar. The average public sector employee still earns no more than $100 a month and a university professor three times that at best.

With a 15 per cent annual inflation rate and public sector wages frozen for the fourth consecutive year, most of Syria's 13 million people see the rainbow in the sky but have not yet felt the warmth of the sun.

However, rent controls are in place, and contrary to many old Arab cities, the character of old Damascus is being preserved by law — although renovations are not sufficiently implemented yet.

Most Syrians, however, cannot enjoy the quaintness of old Damascus but are forced, for lack of alternatives at affordable prices, to live in eastern bloc style high rise housing units which dominate the skyline of the outskirts of Damascus.

The high rise shanty-towns house millions of peasants who migrated from the countryside in the past 15 years to find a better life in Damascus and other cities. Many peasants and even Iranian pilgrims who come to visit Shiite shrines in Syria have moved into some dozen Palestinian refugee camps adjacent to the capital. Syria is host to some 300,000 Palestinian refugees from 1984.

While the poor were once relatively unexposed or were used as conduits for smuggled luxury items from Lebanon, they now see the economic changes and hope that they too will have a role to play in the booming economic future of Syria.

Syrian analysts say that the country's "only" foreign debts to Russian and Eastern bloc countries will be cancelled once a peace deal is concluded. "Why should Egypt and Jordan have their debts written off and Syria be expected to pay theirs?", asked one analyst. "It will be part and package of the deal." Syria owed some $14 billion to the former Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries — mostly for arms.

The Israelis, say Syrian business people, will be "no threat" to Syria economically. "For us they are economically unimportant," says Dr. Sankar.

A young Syrian entrepreneur Imad, who runs the Pizza Hot says, "business is so good we can hardly keep up with the demand — we don't need Israel or Israeli clients for anything.

The country registered an 8 per cent growth rate in 1993 and the 1994 figure is expected to exceed that. Since 1991 over 450 new companies have already started production in everything from furniture to finished garments to food produce.

Looking back, analysts say "the seeds for the economic revolution" that is taking place were sown in 1986 when the economy hit rock bottom after the price of oil fell. (Syria produces some 500,000 barrels of oil a day). The Iran-Iraq war, in which Syria backed Iran, was about to end and the winds of change were already settling in.

After the decline and dismemberment of the eastern bloc and the Soviet Union, Syria's superpower ally, the Syrian leadership began its plans to implement change.

These changes towards a market economy, say Syrian businessmen are "natural". "Syria has a 4000 year history of market economy — it is only taking its natural route," explained Dr. Sankar.

هكذا من الأصل

Riyadh announces fresh revenue-boosting measures

DUBAI (R) — Cash-strapped Saudi Arabia announced more price increases for public services Monday aimed at boosting revenue in 1995 and introducting fiscal discipline in the kingdom, the world's largest oil producer.

Tickets for domestic air travel on Saudia, the state carrier which monopolises local flights, rose in price by 10 per cent for economy class and 20 per cent for first class, according to broadcast government decrees.

The airline has been involved for almost a year in complex talks with U.S. manufacturers to buy some 60 new aircraft worth more than $6 billion. Its inability to generate profits has been a stumbling block in its negotiations to obtain credits.

The government also introduced new telephone charges.

A subscriber will no longer be able to make unlimited local calls free of charge, a $150 connection charge is introduced and annual telephone subscriptions are doubled to $100 a year.

Saudi Arabia in 1994 signed a $4 billion deal with ATT Corp of the United States to install 1.5 million new telephone lines but a budget statement issued Sunday said that deal was self-financing and did not require additional state funds.

Monday's decrees also increased water charges according to a five-tier system. Small consumers will pay 10 halala (2.6 U.S. cents) while larger users will be charged six riyals ($1.6) per cubic metre.

The decrees did not give a percentage for the rise in water charges, formerly levied at a flat rate. But analysts said it was designed not to hurt lower income Saudis in the desert kingdom that depends mainly on costly sea water desalination.

Saudi Arabia, which has been suffering cash flow problems due to a drop in oil prices and costs incurred during the 1991 Gulf war, introduced a $36 billion budget for 1995 Sunday with a $4 billion forecast deficit.

The kingdom has been running budget deficits since the 1980s but started introducing political and economic reforms last year.

Other measures announced Sunday included doubling local petrol prices and increased electricity charges for high consumers.

For the first time too, it slapped a 1,000 riyal ($267) fee on visas for those arriving in the kingdom to work and said work permits in future would cost 100 riyals ($27) and residency permit 500 riyals ($133).

The measures indicate that oil giant Saudi Arabia is moving decisively to convince the world of its seriousness in dealing with a cash crunch by cutting spending in its 1995 budget, slashing some subsidies and increasing public service prices.

It announced Sunday a six per cent spending cut for 1995, which would still leave it with a $4 billion deficit.

Economists and diplomats said that although the spending cut was smaller than the 20 per cent budget in 1994, the overall impact was too more than half the budget deficit.

Economists said the measures signalled to both the Saudi public and the government's bankers and foreign trading partners that it was determined to set its house in order and prepared to take unpopolar decisions to ensure fiscal discipline.

The biggest surprise in Sunday's budget was the deficit figures.

By coming clean and speaking openly about a budget deficit. Saudi Arabia confirmed what everyone had known for a long time and gave its finances some of the transparency necessary to generate credibility, the economists said.

Last year it spoke of a balanced budget, while in fact planning for a 40 billion riyals ($10.6 billion) deficit as this year's figures showed. It apparently included expected income from bank and other borrowing and the sale of government securities as part of the original 1994 revenue figure.

The economists and diplomats said the budget measures were largely in line with what was expected of the government of the world's largest oil producer and exporter to deal with its worst cash shortage in decades of oil wealth.

"It seems to be a good budget and shows they are serious about cuts," one dipomat said.

"The International Monetary Fund had expected a 20 billion rival ($5.3 billion) cut, but the 15 billion ($4 billion) is good enough," another said.

"They did not go as far as they could have but they want to slash subsidies gradually, but we will see similar other measures over the years," an economist said.

The diplomats and economists said it was not immediately clear how much cash the new measures would generate.

Coupled with steps taken last year to cut agricultural subsidies, they reverse a trend for higher subsidies and generous welfare benefits for the country's 12 million people.

"They were getting to the point where there was no way they could finance the water, electricity and refining capacity expansions needed at present rates of consumption," an economist said.

Saudi Arabia increased subsidies in 1992 after the Gulf war at an annual cost of about $350 million even after having to pay the bulk of the cost of the war to expel Iraq from neighbouring Kuwait. It paid some $55 billion for the war.

The budget puts revenues at 135 billion riyals ($36 billion) from 120 billion riyals ($32 billion). It seems to assume higher oil revenues that provide the bulk of state funds.

Spending is to decline by six per cent to 150 billion riyals ($40 billion) from 160 billion riyals ($42.6 billion) last year.

The diplomats and economists said this year's budget was more detailed than in 1994, but again did not mention defence apending which they thought fell under an "others" item covering about $14 billion in outlays.

The last announced figure for defence spending was in 1993 when it was put at $16.4 billion.

They said it was not clear where the spending cuts would be, but the breakdown of spending compared to the last available figures in the 1993 budget show decreases across the board.

Cuts compared with 1993 were: Education 20 per cent, health and social development six per cent, municipal and water 14.6 per cent, infrastructure, industry and electricity 53 per cent, transport and communication eight per cent, subsidies 24 per cent, and state lending institutions 34 per cent.

In an important step for many companies that have complained of problems because the government was not paying its bills on time, King Fahd ordered the finance ministry to clear as soon as possible a backlog of payments to domestic creditors.

Diplomats and economists estimate that the government owes billions of dollars in arrears to contractors and suppliers.

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U.S. turns best results in '94 despite rising interest rates

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. economy in 1994 turned in one of its best performances in decades, with low inflation, a decline in unemployment and solid growth despite a series of moves to tighten credit.

Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, who has announced he will step down, called the figures "the best numbers in 30 years."

Gross domestic product growth for the full year should be close to 3.5 per cent, the highest since 1988 and better than any of the other Group of Seven industrialised countries except Canada.

The two pillars of economic good health — industrial investment and consumer spending — both grew amid increasing confidence in the U.S. economy, higher levels of income and growth in jobs.

At the same time, consumer prices through October rose at an annual rate of just 2.6 per cent, lower than in 1993.

The jobless rate has fallen from 6.7 per cent in January to 5.6 per cent in November as 1.4 million people came off unemployment rolls. Over 22 months, the United States created more jobs than all its Groop of Seven partners combined.

The only question mark about the world's largest economy is the prospect of higher interest rates.

Federal Reserve (Fed) Chairman Alan Greenspan, who has led the charge to boost interest rates to keep the economy from overheating despite fear that the moves could choke off growth, said recently that "the impressive performance of the American economy continues."

The Fed has acted six times since February to boost the key federal funds rate to 5.5 per cent and the discount rate to 4.75 per cent, and Mr. Greenspan suggested that more interest rates hike could be coming despite no apparent signs of inflation running rampant.

The Fed moves have caused concern on Wall Street, particularly on the bond market, where rising interest rates eroded the value of investments.

The resilience of the U.S. economy comes from several factors. For one, the rate hikes take some time to dampen borrow and spending. And banks, which have been posting strong earnings, have limited the effect of the rate hikes on loans.

Loan demand has remained strong amid the economic expansion, and U.S. firms have been able to use low-cost production facilities abroad to meet consumer demand for products without boosting prices.

India's Congress promises farm policy

NEW DELHI (R) — India's Congress Party, trounced in recent state elections, has sought more investments in agriculture to win back its traditional voters — the poor peasants and rich farmers, Congress officials have said.

Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao has been under mounting pressure to deliver economic benefits to farmers, a potent political force, after the Congress Party was routed in three of the four states that went to polls recently.

Elections in five other states are due in February and Congress officials said Mr. Rao had also started planning for the parliamentary polls due in mid-1996.

"We have to fight for the farmers if we have to keep the Congress support base," said junior home minister Rajesh Pilot, regarded as an influential representative of the farmers' lobby in the party.

About 65 per cent of India's 900 million people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Congress deputies said the three-year-old economic reforms programme had virtually ignored this group.

"While the industrialists have benefitted from the new economic policies, the farmers have not gained," said Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, a former minister who heads a left-wing trade unionist lobby within the party.

Finance Minister Manmohan Singh has been singled out for criticism over the Congress' electoral losses. He said farmers needed a better credit policy than subsidies to flourish.

"The problem of revitalising the credit system for agriculture is a special dimension of the efforts to make agriculture and the rural sector efficient," Mr. Singh told a meeting of farmers and farm experts last month.

"The bias against agriculture exports requires to be further reduced," he said.

Mr. Singh said improvements in the organisation and functioning of agriculture would help bridge rural-urban disparities.

There have been populist demands too, led by Agriculture Minister Balram Jakhar.

He told a farmers' meeting in the southern Indian city of Coimbatore that parliament would soon approve a new agriculture policy to extend to farmers all benefits available to the industry.

The policy would include extending low-interest loans of up to 25,000 rupees ($800) to farmers a year, Mr. Jakhar told the meeting.

The farmers demanded a national policy to bring parity between the farm input prices and the market prices for the produce.

The electoral losses in the southern states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Rao's home state, has set off a bout of soul-searching within the Congress Party.

There is broad support in the party for putting a "human face" on Mr. Rao's economic reforms programme, which has helped many firms but led to added hardship for many poor voters.

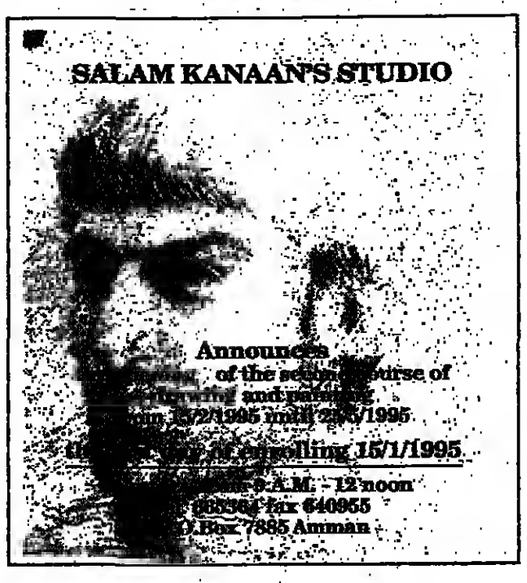
"The next budget must have something to wipe the tears of the poor," Welfare Minister Sitaram Kesri said recently.

Some deputies are pressing Mr. Singh to retain or increase subsidies to farmers ahead of the elections.

But Mr. Singh told a pre-budget consultative meeting that a rise in farm subsidies was not feasible as it would put pressure on the budget deficit.

Mr. Singh has been under attack from senior party leaders who say his reforms have hurt the poor and alienated them from the party.

SALAM KANAAN'S STUDIO



Announces
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Mexico package expected to provide $10-$15b

MEXICO CITY (R) — Mexico is negotiating an economy rescue package with "friendly" countries and banks that is expected to provide $10 billion to $15 billion the country can draw upon if needed, according to finance ministry documents.

The package is part of an economic stabilisation plan unveiled Monday by President Ernesto Zedillo as he struggles to regain control over a falling peso.

The documents obtained by Reuters said the plan will aim to increase private and public savings to bring about "a rapid and ordered reduction" in the country's $28 billion current account deficit.

Mr. Zedillo's hope, according to the documents, is to finance the deficit "without depending on short-term foreign capital," and at the same time avoid plunging Mexico into an endless cycle of inflation and further devaluation of the peso.

The documents said the rescue package will give Mexico money that "if circumstances require it, (can be used) to stabilise the financial markets. This package would reach an amount of $10 billion to $15 billion."

The peso has lost 40 per cent of its value since the government, facing a run on its international reserves, announced on Dec. 21 that it would be allowed to float freedly.

Foreign investors have blamed the current account deficit and an unresolved peasant rebellion in the state of Chiapas for Mexico's sudden economic crisis.

The finance ministry documents said Mr. Zedillo's plan would require "additional sacrifices" from all sectors of society, but that even though public spending will be cut," the federal government will not sacrifice social programmes aimed at taking care of the most important necessities of the population."

The documents also said that "structural changes" will be necessary to improve the competitiveness of Mexican industry and that the plan will include measures to "encourage investment in basic infrastructure and services."

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: This morning finds a possible break-up in old conditions but the evening conjunction of Mercury and Uranus opens the door to all sorts of new situations in which you can effectively pioneer your point of view.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You have to be careful that someone does not get the best of you in some monetary matter today which could be detrimental to your finances.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) If you get your health and appearance improved, you will find it easier to gain your personal desires and get what you truly look forward to.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You feel restricted in some way, but if you calm down, you can handle the matter logically. Show some kindness for your loved ones.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Your friends may be too busy at this time, so don't try to pressure them in any way. Be happy tonight and feel contented.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be on your guard in the outside world so that you cannot be criticised in any way. Show your devotion to kin in the evening.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Avoid going off on any tangents, and don't make any unnecessary changes to your routine. You should not confide any secret information to a stranger.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Use your own, mature judgement rather than consulting one who could not help you. Fix your wardrobe and be charming to your close friends.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You could have a confrontation with one who is as stubborn as you are, so postpone meeting for a while. Be very social later.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get away from assignments if you can, but if not, be sure to do your fair share of it. Try to solve your private worries quickly.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Do not interfere if a disagreement starts between a friend and your erstwhile mate. Show that you are sensible towards others.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Don't indulge in any disagreement with one who lives with you over some worldly affair. You seek peace and solitude in the evening.

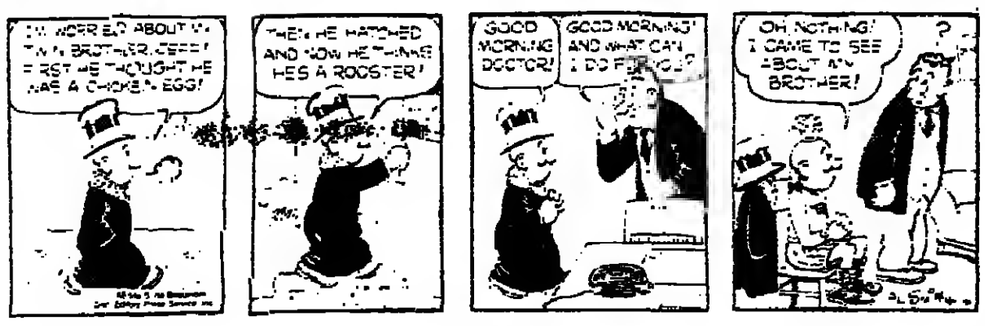
PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) It is most important you use care in motion of all kind, especially on the roads. Be careful in correspondence, make sure words are correct.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

"I dreamed Jack Frost was nipping at my nose and he looked just like Mel Gibson!"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ZEMIA

LORGY

YOCUTH

RAWSUL

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

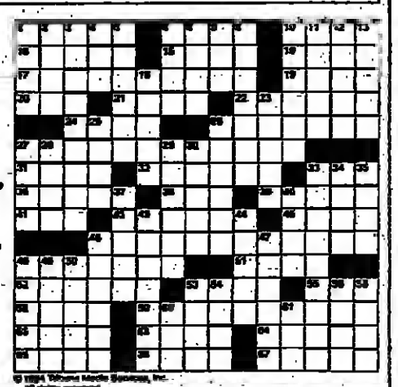
Answer here: A ____ OF ____

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: GUILE AFTER SUBDUE GIGGLE

Answer: How she improved her knowledge — BY DEGREES

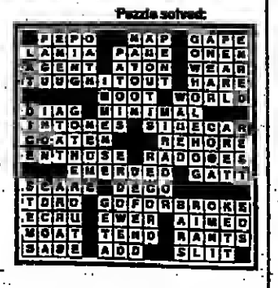
THE Daily Crossword by Gayle Dean



ACROSS
1 See eye to eye
6 "Hawkeye"
10 Church part
14 Duke
15 Diving bird
16 Clownish
17 Run with a husky voice?
19 Balsam or banana
20 Fuss
21 Chomping at the bit
22 More timid
24 Breakwater
26 Craps roll
27 Familiar smells?
31 Last word
32 Less fresh
33 Links org.
35 Sudden fear
38 Nice friend?
39 Pale
41 Remnant
42 Morning receptions
45 Numismatist's unit
46 "Name That Tune," e.g.?
48 Jejune
51 Of flight: pref.
52 Meat
53 Lounge about
55 Thickly tangled mass
58 Neck-and-neck
59 Bit of spice?
62 Trim
63 DeValera's land
64 "Sesame Street" name
65 Commits a faux pas
66 Big man on campus
67 Interprets

DOWN
1 Taj Mahal site
2 Like some tidings
3 Enclose
4 Vaine dir.
5 Surround with light
6 Jet —
7 Fauntleroy, e.g.
8 John — Passos
9 Showy flower
10 Tenochtitlan denizens, once
11 Snow coat
12 Show contempt
13 Those who ogle
18 Balking horse
23 Cast of thousands member
25 All: pref.
26 Doctrine
27 Cert. e.g.
28 Arabian gulf
29 Broken inward
30 Carved gem
33 Observable facts
34 Fellow
35 Hill dwellers
37 Thunder units
40 Sore reminder
43 Radiated
44 Libra symbol
46 Powerful men
47 Assistant
48 Peace goddess
49 At no time
50 Asparagus stalk
53 Vega's constellation
54 Sign
56 Sour
57 Golf needs
60 Harden
61 Wrath

Puzzle solved:



هكذا من الأصل

business daily beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

JIC chief unveils '95 programme

☆☆Jordan Investmeot Corporation (JIC) Director-General Mohammad Batayneh said the JIC implemeoted, io 1994, projects that cost JD 24 million. He noted that most of these projeets' output, especially tomato paste, frozen vegetables and veterinary vaccines, were exported. Mr. Batayneh said the JIC was preparing feasibility studies to implement various projects this year. Some of the projects are a gypsum plaster plant at Al Rashadiyyeh, in southern Jordan, for an estimated cost of JD 2 millioo, and a scheme for a roots and seeds nursery in the Al Ghor area at a JD 2 million cost. JIC is also considering a JD 7 million cable car project to link Hammamat Main with the Dead Sea. Mr. Batayneh revealed that the corporation was in the process of setting up a tourism transport company in collaboration with the private sector which will also be involved with the JIC in setting up a company for duty free shops at border crossings to eater for travellers to and from Jordan (Al Ra'i).

☆☆According to new prices fixed by the Ministry of Supply, Yoghurt in a 200-gramme container sells at 110 fils, whereas the price for a 500-gramme container is 220 fils. Yoghurt in a 1000-gramme container costs 400 fils. Prices of labaneh range from 265 fils per 180-gramme cootainer to 370 fils per 250-gramme container. Larger labaneh containers cost 720 fils (500 grammes) and JD 1,410 (1000 grammes). Prices of processed cheese (boy) were fixed at 415 fils, while a 2-kilogramme block was fixed at JD 4.300. Al Asbbal cheese was given a 425 fils price tag while the Exeter canned meat was priced at 760 fils (Al Ra'i).

☆☆The prime minister urged the Jordan Investment Corporation to speed up the establishmeot of the "National Petroleum Company" to carry out exploration for oil and gas on commercial basis (Al Ra'i).

☆☆Unloading of 30,000 tonnes of American rice is currently under way at Jweidah warehouses. The Ministry of Supply will soon be distributing the rice in the market where it will be sold at the free-market price of 380 fils a kilogramme. Chinese rice is now selling at a subsidised price against the 1995 coupons (Al Ra'i).

☆☆The ministry of finance will conduct a reevaluation of housing nnits io 1996 as the ministry is seeking to increase its collection of property tax (Al Musaqafat) (Al Dustour).

☆☆ The Jordan Insurance Company recorded a gross profit of JD 371,699 during the April-September (mid-year) period. The profit covered the JD 190,900 losses the company incurred at its "outside branehes" (Al Aswaq).

☆☆ Banks face about JD 80 million of extra spending in 1995 as a result of issuiog new magnetic-type of cheques, expandiog and building oew headquarters and on-line connection between all branches (Al Aswaq).

☆☆Many industrialists and businessmen are complaining about the short ootice given by the central bank of Jordan for switching to magnetic cheques by July. They wish the central bank extend the period until the end of 1995 because they have many cheques of the old type that extend beyond the July deadline and they find it very difficult to change the cheques (Al Dustour).

☆☆The minister of supply issued a decision under which a new formula was set up to price auto spare parts. The new formula works out into a reduction of between 16-18 per cent in the prices of spare parts (Al Dustour).

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ARAB BANK	660	119810	181.500	181.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	2557	10692	4.320	4.110
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK /NEW	35595	138734	4.040	2.840
BANK OF JORDAN	200	750	3.800	2.750
THE HOUSING BANK	7850	44565	5.700	5.690
JORDAN KUWAIT BANK	959	2854	2.990	2.980
JORDAN GULF BANK	1292	2059	1.590	1.590
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	2562	9438	2.700	2.710
BEIT ELMAL SAVING&INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	1750	5468	3.120	2.120
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	5500	8185	1.490	1.480
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK.	1200	2184	1.700	1.680
BANKS SECTOR	60225	344728	INDEX NUMBER: 156.85 CHANGE: -0.26%	
JORDAN INSURANCE	6000	20400	3.400	2.400
INSURANCE SECTOR	6000	20400	INDEX NUMBER: 138.21 CHANGE: 0.00%	
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	2236	5129	1.530	1.540
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER /NEW	2015	3019	1.490	1.500
JORDAN HIMEH MINERAL	1400	2528	2.400	2.520
VEHICLES OWNERS FEDERATION	2900	19575	6.750	8.750
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	450	1272	2.140	2.050
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	550	1325	2.420	2.420
JORDAN GULF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	1000	1170	1.170	1.170
MACHINARY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE	700	525	.770	.750
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALRA'I	2750	46992	12.500	12.650
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	14900	25766	2.290	2.410
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	1450	5003	2.490	3.450
SERVICES SECTOR	22451	123404	INDEX NUMBER: 121.89 CHANGE: -0.24%	
ATTANQEEP CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	1450	1931	1.280	1.240
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	112568	227599	2.900	2.910
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	100	297	2.980	2.970
THE ARAB POTASH/NEW	1300	6955	5.410	5.250
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINARY	386	2602	9.300	9.380
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	250	1113	4.550	4.400
THE JORDAN WORSTED MILLS	400	3080	7.700	7.700
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	2700	14022	5.190	5.200
JORDAN DAIRY	1150	2760	2.450	2.400
SPINNING & WEAVING	4450	11802	2.700	2.700
RAFIA INDUSTRIES	2500	6988	2.750	2.790
DAR AL DAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	500	8100	16.200	16.200
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	4000	4000	1.020	1.000
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	555	2827	6.650	6.900
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	14550	12594	.920	.940
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	4500	6295	1.270	1.440
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	600	2580	4.260	4.300
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JIMCO	6650	5554	.840	.840
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	100	525	5.200	5.250
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	250	693	2.790	2.770
KAWTHER INVESTMENT	1250	2424	1.750	1.800
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	500	2098	4.210	4.190
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	160829	429925	INDEX NUMBER: 128.27 CHANGE: +0.02%	
GRAND TOTAL	259505	918477	INDEX NUMBER: 143.22 CHANGE: -0.21%	

NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET : 122900
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET : 132756

Indonesia records 6.2 per cent growth

JAKARTA (AFP) — The Indooesian economy grew at a rate that exceeded the targetted 6.2 per cent for 1994, Indonesian President Suharto has said.

"The growth of our economy in 1994 is estimated to exceed 6.2 per cent, the target for the first year of the sixth five-year development plan," President Suharto said in reference to the programme that was launched on April 1.

The Indonesian government in August 1993 predicted the country's annual economic growth rate would reach between six and 6.5 per cent in the sixth development plan, with an annual average of 6.2 per cent.

In his nationwide televised year-eod speech, President Suharto said that Indonesia could express relief that the economy had grown quite well.

President Suharto, though, provided oo precise figures.

He said the country's inflatioo rate was "quite high, even though it was still below 10 per cent."

He said that the industrial sector, as well as oon-oil and gas exports, had shown "adequate growth," but gave no details.

However, President Suharto said, the agricultural sector recorded a slowdown, mainly due to a prolonged dry season this year.

He added that non-oil imports also rose.

Financial Markets — **Jordan Times** in co-operation with **Cairo Amman Bank**

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	23/12/94 Close	30/12/94 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.5463	1.5665	1.31%
Deutsche Mark	1.5793	1.5495	1.92%
Swiss Franc	1.3329	1.3090	1.83%
French Franc	5.4525	5.3370	2.16%
Japanese Yen	100.12	99.75	0.37%

* USD Per STG

Euro-Currency Interest Rates*

Currency	23/12/1994 1-Month (%)	23/12/1994 1-Year (%)	30/12/1994 1-Month (%)	30/12/1994 1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	5.95	7.56	5.81	7.12
Sterling Pound	5.87	7.62	5.81	7.25
Deutsche Mark	5.12	5.62	5.00	5.56
Swiss Franc	3.87	4.68	3.66	4.62
French Franc	5.68	6.94	5.63	6.81
Japanese Yen	2.31	2.59	2.12	2.43

* Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 31/12/1994

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7000	0.7020
Sterling Pound	1.0954	1.1009
Deutsche Mark	0.4513	0.4536
Swiss Franc	0.5342	0.5369
French Franc	0.1310	0.1317
Japanese Yen*	0.7010	0.7045
Dutch Guilder	0.4031	0.4051
Swedish Krona	******	*****
Italian Lira*	0.0432	0.0434
Belgian Franc	*****	*****

* Per 100

AFM folds '94 with obvious stagnation

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Amman Financial Market (AFM) ended the last week of 1994 with an obvious stagnation described by brokers as resulting from a waiting mode adopted by investors.

The report of the AFM for the week ending Dec. 28 showed a weekly turnover of JD 7.3 million.

The general share price index based on 60 major companies listed in the market closed at 143.6 points, down 0.8 points or 0.6 per cent, said the report, which was released Sunday.

The separate sector indices showed mixed results during the week. The banking sector index closed at 157.78 down 1.4 points or 0.9 per cent and the industrial sector index closed at 128.16 points, down five points or 0.4 per cent. The services sector closed 1.1 points or 0.8 per cent higher at 131.39 points and the insurance sector index closed at 138.21, up 1.1 per cent to 0.8 per cent.

The banking sector accounted for JD 3.14 millioo, or 41 per cent of the weekly volume, followed by the industrial sector with JD 3.03 million, or 39.6 per cent, the services sector with JD 1.46 million or 19.1 per cent and insurance stock with JD 24,000, or 0.3 per cent, the AFM report said.

Shares of 86 companies were traded during the week, which saw 2.9 million shares changing hands under 3,551 contracts. As the week closed, shares of 25 companies showed gains, 48 showed declines and 13 remained stable, the AFM report said.

Brokers said the relative stagnation in the market was largely due to abstention by many investors from trading as they awaited year-end results of many companies expected to be announced this month.

"Some of the results are already out but many companies are keeping the figures a closely guarded secret, opting to go by the book and release the figures after the auditing process is over," said a broker, who, like other dealers in the market, cannot be identified by name.

The broker said the average weekly turnover that the market saw last week was mainly because of sellings by those who wanted quick liquidity to balance their bank accounts as of Dec. 31 for internal banking purposes.

By and large the market failed to repeat its impressive performance during the previous year because of many uncertainties related to the Middle East peace process, Jordanian-Palestinian economic relations and fears of taxation on capital gains. Furthermore, expected foreign capital inflow failed to materialise to the level that was predicted at the beginning of the year.

However, analysts said that the market had shed a lot of "superficialities" during the year and was more stabilised in terms of prices during the year.

AFM Director General Umayyah Touqan is expected to address the press this week to release final figures for the year and sum up his view of the market.

Seychelles opens up for foreign investment

VICTORIA (AFP) — Slap bang in the middle of the Indian Ocean, the dreamy Seychelles islands, for so long marketed as a tourist paradise, are now trading on their strategic location in a bid to make it as an international business centre.

Situated midway between African and Asia, and between the Middle East and Australia, Seychelles hopes to attract major investors in transhipment and offshore banking, economists here say.

The national assembly, the first multi-party parliament in 18 years, last month overwhelmingly approved legislation providing a framework for transforming the islands into a turntable for intercontinental trade.

Finance and Communications Minister James Michel said in a recent interview that the new law aims to encourage investors to make the most of the islands'. strategic location and get maximum use out of the existing modern deepwater port and international airport.

Recently the government privatised operations in Port Victoria and reduced charges for ship and cargo handling to the same levels as those in Durban, Mauritius, Singapore and Dubai.

Port Victoria, handling over 200,000 tonnes of tuna a year, is already a major transhipment centre for fish in the Indian Ocean.

The government is also touting its modern telecommunication facilities as another advantage Seychelles has over other countries in the Indian Ocean.

Mr. Michel said Syechelles would set aside space at the port and airport for storage and reexport facilities and for setting up international trade zones.

The international business companies acts also provides for the incorporation, registration and control of offshore companies whose revenue will not be taxed.

Mr. Michel said the law is based on Caribbean models.

Presenting the 1995 budget, the minister also announced new regulations that would strengthen the role of the private sector in the nation's economy.

"Now we are asking them to play a bigger role," the minister said.

Investors will pay less in social security contributions for their workers and benefit from a range of tax reductions if they meet national objectives such as job creation and foreign exchange generation.

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A final look back at sports champions in the past year

By The Associated Press

ATHLETICS

Women

Overall — Jackie Joyner-Kersee, United States
100 — Merlene Ottey, Jamaica
400 — Marie-Marie-Jose Perec, France
1500 — Angela Chalmers, Canada
5000 — Sonia O'Sullivan, Ireland
100 hurdles — Svetla Dimitrova, Bulgaria
Long jump — Joyner-Kersee
Discus — Ilke Wyludda, Germany
Javelin — Natalya Shikoleoko, Belarus

American Jackie Joyner-Kersee concentrates before throwing the shot (AFP photo)

Noureddine Morceli

Men

Overall — Nooreddine Morceli, Algeria
100 — Dennis Mitchell, United States
400 — Derek Mills, United States
1500 — Morceli
5000 — Khalid Skah, Morocco
400 hurdles — Samuel Matette, Zambia
High jump — Javier Sotomayour, Cuba
Triple jump — Mike Conley, United States
Shot put — Randy Barnes, United States
Hammer throw — Andrey Abduvaliyev, Tajikistan

AUTO RACING

FIA

Formula Ooe — Michael Schumacher, Germany
Formula 3000 — Marco Apicella, Italy
World Rally — Didier Auriol, France

Indycar

PPG Cup — Al Unser, Jr., United States

IMSA

World Sports Car — Wayne Taylor, United States

BASEBALL

Professional

U.S. MLB
National League — Philadelphia Phillies—X
American League — Toronto Blue Jays-X
World Series — None
X-Declared champions

Japan

National League — Yumiuri Giants
Pacific League — Seibu Lions
Japan Series — Yomiori Giants

Amateur

World Championship — Cuba

German Formula One champion Michael Schumacher and his team manager during a practice session (AFP photo)

Brazil's players celebrate their 4th World Cup triumph

Little League

World series — Maracaibo, Venezuela

BASKETBALL

Men

World championship — United States
Goodwill Games — Puerto Rico
European Cup — Juventut Badaluna, Spain
England — Thames Valley Tigers
France — CSP Limoges
Germany — Bayer Levenkusen
Israel — Maccabi Tel Aviv
Italy — Buckler Bologna
Spain — Real Madrid
United States (NBA) — Houston Rockets
U.S. College (NCAA) — Arkansas

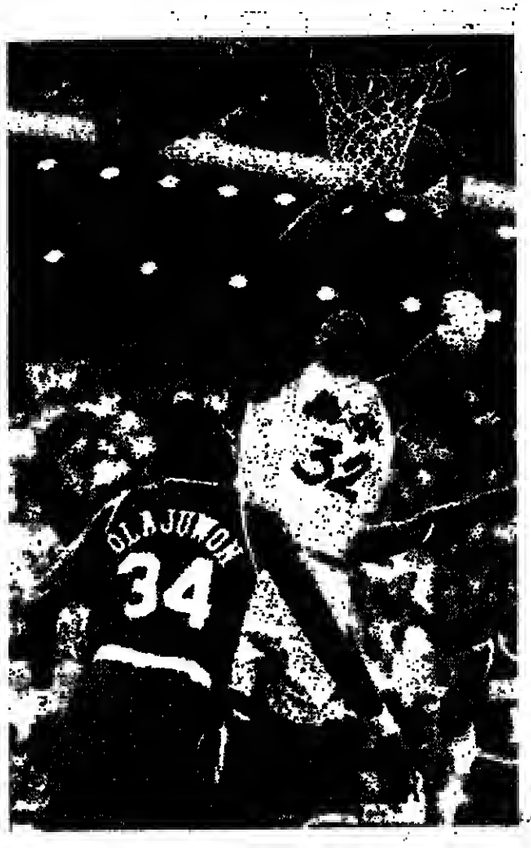
Women

World Championship — Brazil
Goodwill Games — United States
Jones Cup — United States

SOCCER

International

World Cup — Brazil
African Nations Cup — Nigeria
European Cup — AC Milan (Italy)



Orlando Magic centre Shaquille O'Neal #32 slam dunks a basket as Houston Rockets centre Hakeem Olajuwon fails to stop him (AFP photo)

Eoropean Cup Winners Cup — Arsenal (England)
UEFA Cup — Internazionale of Milan (Italy)
South American Super Cup — Independente (Argentina)
Conmebol Cup — Sao Paolo (Brazil)

Leagues

Europe

Austria — Casino Salzburg
Belgium — Anderlecht
Bulgaria — Levski Sofia
Croatia — Hajdur Split
Czech Republic — Sparta Prague
Denmark — Silkeburg
Eogland — Manchester United
France — Paris-St. Germain
Germany — Bayern Munich
Greece — AEK Athens
Hungary — VAC
Ireland — Shamrock Rovers
Italy — AC Milan
Netherlands — Ajax Amsterdam
Northern Ireland — Linfield
Poland — Legia Warsaw
Portugal — Benfica
Romaoia — Steaoa Bucharest
Scotland — Rangers
Slovakia — Slovan Bratislava
Spain — Barcelona
Switzerland — Servette
Torkey — Galatasaray

South America

Argeotina — River Plate, Indedepeodiente
Brazil — Palmeiras
Bolivia — Bolivar
Chile — Universidad de Chile
Colombia — Nacional
Uruguay — Penarol
Venezuela — Caracas

Japan — Verdy Kawasaki

SWIMMING AND DIVING

Men

50 freestyle — Alexander Popov, Russia
100 freestyle — Popov
100 breaststroke — Norbert Rusza, Hungary
100 butterfly — Rafal Szukala, Poland
100 backstroke — Martin Lopez-Zubero, Spain
200 freestyle — Antti Kasviu, Finland
200 backstroke — Vladimir Selkov, Russia
200 breaststroke — Rusza
200 individual medley — Jani Stevinen, Finland
400 freestyle — Kieren Perkins, Australia
400 individual medley — Tom Dulan, United States
1,500 freestyle — Perkins
25 km long course — Grege Streppel, Canada
400 medley relay — United States
800 freestyle relay — Sweden

Women

50 freestyle — Le Jingyi, China
100 breaststroke — Samantha Riley, Australia
100 butterfly — Liu Limin, China
100 backstroke — He Cihon, China
200 freestyle — Franzi Van Aomsick, Germany
200 breaststroke — Riley
200 butterfly — Liu
200 individual medley — Lu Bin, China
400 freestyle — Yang Aihua, China
400 individual medley — Dai Guuhung, China
800 freestyle — Janet Evans, United States
25km long course — Melissa Cunningham, Australia
400 freestyle relay — China
400 medley relay — China
800 freestyle relay — China

Diving

World champions

Men

1-metre springboard — Evan Stewart, Zimbabwe
3-metre springboard — Yu Zhuucheng, China
10-metre platform — Dmitry Sautin, Russia
women,
1-Metre springboard — Chen Lixia, China
2-Metre springboard — Tan Shop, China
10-Meter platform — Fu Mingxia, Chioa

TENNIS

Men

Australian Open — Pete Sampras
Eurocard Open — Stefan Edberg
Champions Cup — Sampras
Lipton Championships — Sampras
Monte Carlo Open — Andrei Medvedev
German Opeo — Medvedev
Italian Open — Sampras
World Team Cup — Germany
French Open — Sergi Bruguera
Wimbledon — Pete Sampras
Canadian Opeo — Andre Agassi
ATP Championship — Michael Chang
U.S. Open — Agassi
Stockholm Open — Boris Becker

Australian Kieran Perkins

City of Paris — Agassi
ATP World Championship — Sampras
World Doubles Championship — Jan Apell and Jonas Bjrukman
Grand Slam Cup — Magnus Larsson
Davis Cup — Sweden

Women

Australian Open — Steffi Graf
Pan Pacific Open — Graf
Lipton Championship — Graf
Family Circle Cup — Conchita Martinez
Italian Open — Martinez
German Open — Graf
French Open — Arantxa Sanchez Vicario
Wimbledon — Martinez
Federation Cup — Spain
Canadian Open — Sanchez Vicario
European Indoors — Magdalenda Maleeva
Virginia Slims of Philadelphia — Anke Huber
Virginia Slimps Championship — Gabriela Sabatini

Steffi Graf

VOLLEYBALL

World Champions

Men — Italy
Women — Cuba

WEIGHTLIFTING

World champions

Men

54kg — Halil Mutlu, Turkey
59kg — Nikolai Peshalov, Bulgaria
64kg — Naim Suleymanoglu, Turkey
70kg — Fedail Guler, Turkey
76kg — Palbo Lara, Cuba
83kg — Marc Auster, Germany
91kg — Alexei Petrov, Russia
99kg — Sergei Syrisov, Russia
108kg — Timur Taimazov, Ukraine
Over 108kg — Alexander Kurluvica, Belarus

Pete Sampras

Women

46kg — Yanhong Yun, China
50kg — Robin Byrd, United States
54kg — Sheng Wang, China
59kg — Feie Zun, China
64kg — Hongyun Li, China
70kg — Meihung Zhou, China
76kg — Panag Antunopoulou, Greece
83kg — Maria Orrotia, Colombia
Over 83kg — Dan Li, China

GYMNASTICS

Artistic

World Champions

Men

All around — Ivan Ivankov, Belarus
Floor exercise — Vitaly Scherbu, Belarus
Pummel Horse — Maius Orzica, Romania
Rings — Yuri Chechi, Italy
Vault — Scherbu
Horizontal Bar — Schekbu
Parallel Bars — Huang Liping, China

Women

All Around — Shannun Miller, United States
Vault — Ginh Gugeana, Romania
Uneven Bars — Lun Li, China
Balance Beam — Miller
Floor Exercise — Dina Rochetkuva, Russia

HANDBALL

Men — Germany
Women — Russia

ICE HOCKEY

World Championships — Canada
Olympics — Sweden
NHL Stanley Cup — New York Rangers

CYCLING

Road Cycling

Paris-Nice — Tony Rominger, Switzerland
Liege-Bastonge — Eugueni Berzin, Russia
Vuelta de Espagna — Rominger
Tour Dupont — Vyacheslav Yerimov, Russia
Giru D' Italia — Berzin
Tour de Suisse — Pascal Richard, Switzerland
Tour of Britain — Mauriziu Fondriest, Italy
Tour of Catalunya — Claudio Chiapucci, Italy
Tour of Galicia — Laudelinu Cubinu, Spain
Basque Tour — Tony Rominger, Switzerland
Ruta Mexico — Raul Accala, Mexico
Paris-Nice — Rominger
Tour de France — Miguel Indurain, Spain
Tour of Andalusia — Stefanao Della Santa, Italy
San Sebastian Classic — Armand de Las Cuevas, France

World Championships

Men

100km team time trial — Italy
Professionala Road Race — Lud Leblanc, France

Women

50km team time trial — Russia

Track Cycling
World Championships

Men

1km time trial — Florian Rousseau, France
Keirin — Marty Nothstein, United States
Motor-race — Carstein Podlesch, Germany
Points Race — Bruno Risi, Switzerland
Pursuit — Chris Boardman, England
Sprint — Nothstein
Team Pursuit — Germany (Andreas Bach, Guido Fulsi, Daniln Hondo, Jens Lehman)
Tandem — Fabrice Colas and Frederic Magne, France

Women

Points Race — Ingrid Haringa, Netherlands
Pursuit — Marion Clignei, France
Sprint — Galina Ennikhina, Russia

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Cinema PLAZA Tel.: 699238
Julia Roberts/Nick Nolte in
I Love Trouble
Shows 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
The Lion King
Shows: 10:30, 12:30, 3:30, 5:00

Cinema CONCORD Tel.: 677420
CONCORD '1'
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CONCORD '2'
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هكذا من الأصل

Blackburn forge ahead as Manchester United struggle

LONDON (AFP) — Blackburn Rovers shot further ahead in the English Premiership Saturday as their nearest challengers had a mixed day.

Blackburn won 1-0 at Crystal Palace, and third-placed Liverpool won 2-0 at Leeds. But Manchester United, in second spot, are now three points behind Rovers following a 2-2 draw at Southampton.

And fourth-placed Newcastle lost 2-1 at Norwich to continue their disappointing recent run.

Blackburn's Alan Shearer started off their goal move to put Jason Wilcox through — but his shot rebounded out to Chris Sutton. Then Sutton's header across the face of goal found Tim Sherwood who hit Blackburn's winner in the 67th minnte at Crystal Palace.

Bnt Manehester United struggled for their 2-2 draw.

Alex Ferguson, awarded the CBE in the New Year's Honours list and celebrating his 53rd birthday, was on the verge of having his day ruined by Jim Magilton who scored for the Saints on the stroke of half-time.

But Nicky Butt rewarded United's second half pressure with his first senior goal from a cross from Eric Cantona, who was later booked.

Neil Heaney outran United's defence to cross low for David Hnghes to score, but Gary Pallister equalised following more good work from Cantona.

England nnder-21 star Jamie Redknapp put third-placed Liverpool, now unbeaten in eight games, 1-0 games, 1-0 ahead after 18 minutes at Elland Road. Robbie Fowler pounced following a Leeds defensive mix-np for Liverpool's second.

Newcastle, who notched up 29 points from a possible 33 at the start of the season, suffered a 2-1 defeat after a midday kick-off at Norwich.

Neil Adams in the first minute, then Ward on 10 minutes virtually scuppered Newcastle's chances though Canaries old boy Ruel Fox converted a 40th minute penalty.

Arsenal, without a win in the league at Highbury since mid-Oetoher, suffered another hlow at home to lose 3-1 against London rivals QPR.

Kevin Gallen gave QPR a 1-0 lead after just three minutes. But John Jenson, after two and a half years at Arsenal, finally scored his first goal to equalise.

But QPR hit back with two goals in as many minutes from Bradley Allen and Andy Impey to spoil the Dane's day. Minor crowd trouble at the clock end confirmed Arsenal supporters' frustration.

In a London derby, Wimbledon drew 1-1 with Chelsea. Chelsea's Paul Furlong put Chelsea ahead in the 57th minute, before Efan Ekoku equalised after the break.

A Julian Darby own goal put Tottenham 1-0 up at Coventry with Spurs showing no signs of leg-weariness after two games within 24 hours earlier in the week.

Then Nick Barmby, Darren Anderton, and Teddy Sheringham gave Tottenham a resounding 4-0 victory.

Everton crushed bottom club Ipswich in a 4-1 home win. Steve Sedgley put basement club Ipswich ahead after just nine minutes, but four million-pound striker Duncan Ferguson made it all square in the 26th minute.

Paul Rideout added two more in the 70th and 74th minutes before Dave Watson hit another in the final minute.

Hotshots Sheffield Wednesday, with nine goals in their last two games, fonnd the net again at Leicester through a 40th minute Graham Hyde goal, which gave the Owls a 1-0 win. Leicester's Steve Thompson also missed a penalty in the second half.

Aston Villa did well to come hack from two goals down at Manchester City to force a 2-2 draw.

City went ahead when Steve Lomas' shot was deflected to former Dynamo Dresden striker Uwe Rosler who hit the ball home in the 14th minute.

Rosler put City further ahead, but an Ian Brightwell own goal almost immediately, and a Dean Saunders equaliser complete Villa's fightback.

Nottingham Forest's unbeaten run of five games ended when West Ham beat them 3-1. Tony Cottee and Ian Bishop struck twice in three minutes. Then Michael Hughes made it 3-0 seconds hefore the hreak. Paul McGregor pulled one back for Forest.

Lakers stop Suns' streak

PHOENIX (AFP) — It was a real Hollywood ending for Cedric Ceballos, whose 37 points for Los Angeles helped the Lakers snap a home court winning streak by Phoenix, the club that traded him away.

"I really wanted to win, not because this is the team where I started but to prove that we can beat the high-ranking teams in the NBA," Ceballos said after the 127-112 victory over Phoenix.

The win broke the Suns' 25-game home streak, which was the longest in the National Basketball Association.

"Personally, it was real emotional for me, because, yon know, I played here and I really wanted to perform well."

The Lakers capitalized on their success from three-point range, with Elden Campbell and Vlade Divac backing up the strong shooting with solid defence.

"We couldn't play any better against this team," said Lakers coach Del Harris, whose team lifted their road record to 10-6 and moved within three games of the Suns in the Pacifie Division standings.

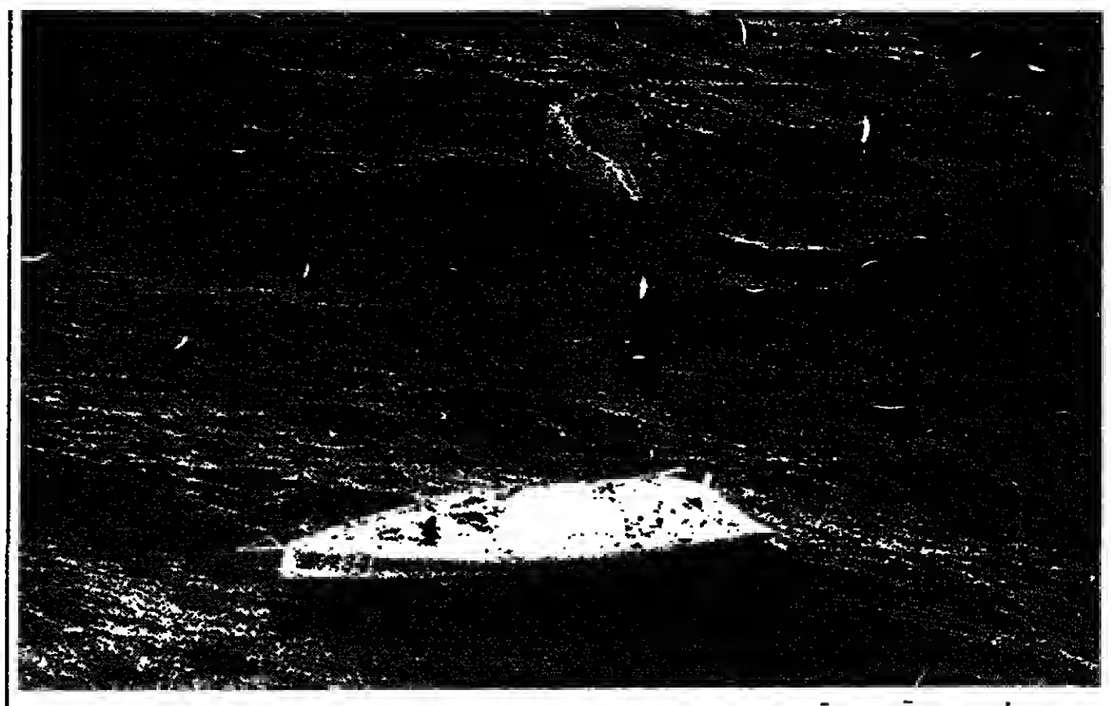
Nick Van Exel, who hit five of 10 three-point attempts, had 21 points and 16 assists.

"I think everyone is more surprised than we are," he said. "We knew what we could do."

Faisali advance to Jordan Cup final

AMMAN (J.T.) — Al Faisali Monday advanced to the final of the Jordan Cup after overcoming Al Hussein 10-9 hy penalties. Their first leg match had ended scoreless.

The other team in the final will he either Al Ramtha or Al Arabi. Their first round encounter had ended 1-0 for Al Ramtha. The second round game has been set for Jan. 16.



French solo yachtswoman Isabelle Autissier sits on her damaged yacht awaiting a rescue helicopter to airlift her to safety (AFP photo)

Rescued yachtswoman reaches dry land, vows to return to sea

ADELAIDE, Australia (AFP) — French solo yachtswoman Isabelle Autissier vowed Monday to return to sea as soon as possible when she finally reached land after a five-day ordeal on a rudderless yacht in mountainous seas.

Looking fit and tanned but tense after a dramatic rescue that cost more than one million dollars ($770,000 U.S.), she touched down on dry land for the first time in weeks to a hero's welcome from BOC yacht race officials, team members and French consular staff.

The 38-year-old veteran, who captured the hearts of Australians after winning the first leg of the round-the-world race but finishing disastrously in the second leg, was generous in her praise of her air force and navy rescuers.

She was winched off the deck of the Ecureuil Poitou Charentes II after the demasted boat wallowed in the gale-swept Southern Ocean ocean for five days, midway between Australia and Antarctica.

It had been under round-the-clock observation hy a shuttle service of Australian air force planes for three days while the guided missile destroyer Darwin, crewed by sailors recalled from Christmas leave, raced to her rescue from Western Australia.

She said her most emotional moment was when she saw the search plane, but the helicopter rescue came as in a dream. "It seems to me it was quite magical... the helicopter coming down with a guy on a line," she said.

Her main concern now was retrieving her yacht if possible. But she would still like to re-enter the race if a boat could be found for the third leg.

"It is very difficult — this boat represents three years of my life. We are very close," she said, adding: "I would like to do the third leg of the BOC if you can get the boat for me."

But she said she would remain in Australia awaiting the results of the search for her one-million-dollar yacht. A deep sea trawler, the Petuna Explorer, left the island state of Tasmania Monday to attempt a salvage operation.

Trawler captain John Peterson said he was fairly confident the yacht could be rescued.

Recalling her ordeal aboard the floundering boat, she said the work of clearing the decks of wreckage and keeping the sea out of a five-square-metre hole in the deck bad allowed her little time to reflect.

Browns stop Patriots, Bears upset Vikings

CLEVELAND (R) — Vinny Testaverde threw for 268 yards and a touchdown in an error-free performance and Cleveland intercepted Drew Bledsoe three times as the Browns beat the New England Patriots 20-13 in an AFC wild card playoff game Sunday.

In an NFC wild card game, Steve Walsh completed 15 of 21 passes for 211 yards and two touchdowns as the Bears manled Minnesota 35-18, avenging two regular-season losses to the Vikings.

With their upset victory, the Bears advance to a meeting with the heavily-favoured San Francisco 49ears Saturday.

The Browns, in their first post-season appearance since 1989, earned a trip to Pittsburgh for a second-round playoff game against the Steelers Saturday.

"We get Pittsburgh again with a big chance to make amends for the regular season," said Testaverde of Cleveland's two losses to the Steelers this year.

In next Sunday's playoff games, the San Diego Chargers host the Miami Dolphins in the AFC and the defending Super Bowl champion Dallas Cowboys host the Green Bay Packers in an NFC second round contest.

In Cleveland it was a case of the pupil beating the teacher as Cleveland head coach Bill Belichick advanced at the expense of New England's Bill Parcells. Belichick was an assistant coach under Parcells with the New York Giants, a combination that led to two Super Bowl titles.

"I know that I wouldn't be standing here if it wasn't for Bill Parcells," Belichick said of his friend and mentor.

Testaverde, in his first career playoff game, completed 20 of 30 passes, including his first 10 of the second half. He didn't throw a single interception against the Pats, who had won their last seven games.

Bledsoe completed 21-of-50 for 235 yards and one touchdown, bnt was picked off three times in New England's first playoff game since 1986.

Cleveland snapped a 10-10 halftime tie on Leroy Hoard's 10-yard touchdown run with 2:21 left in the third quarter. hoard also caught a 25-yard pass from Testaverde on the drive.

Matt Stover's 21-yard field goal with 3:36 left in the game gave the Browns a 20-10 lead after Eric Turner returned an interception of a Bledsoe pass 28 yards.

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WHO'S WHO?

North-South vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ 9 3
♥ K 10 4
♦ Q J 10 9 7
♣ 8 6 2

WEST
♠ 10 7 6 4 2
♥ J 9 7 3
♦ A 3
♣ 7 6

EAST
♠ K Q J
♥ 8 5 2
♦ 6 5 2
♣ J 10 9 4

SOUTH
♠ A 8 6
♥ A Q 6
♦ K 6 4
♣ A K Q 3

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Opening lead: Four of ♠

Follow the bidding and play of this hand, then rate the players by what occurred.

The bidding is routine. South has a maximum two-no-trump opening bid, but with an absolutely flat hand no other action should be contemplated. North's raise to three no trump also would receive the approval of the cognoscenti. You can tell nothing about the ability of the players from the auction.

West led a low spade and declarer allowed East's jack to hold the trick. When East continued with the king of spades, declarer shot up with the ace, then started on diamonds. West took the ace and reverted to spades, but East's queen blocked the suit and there was no way back to the West hand to cash the spade tricks and set the contract. Declarer made 10 tricks. Give us your opinion of the skills of the respective players.

All that can be said without equivocation is that North's performance as dummy was superb. But East's role in the outcome left a good deal to be desired and South was either very good or very lucky.

East's play of the jack of spades at trick one, followed by the king gave away the holding in the suit — it could only [illegible] K Q J. South was either good [illegible] to spot the possible blocking [illegible] had enough not to make a standard holdup play — we don't know!

East should have led the queen of spades to the second trick. That would have left the spade situation in doubt and correct technique would have been for declarer to hold up a second time and hope that East held the ace of diamonds.

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Algerian politician suspicious of hijack

PARIS (Agencies) — Algerian politician Hocine Ait Ahmad has voiced suspicion that the hijackers of a French airliner had covert help from Algiers authorities seeking to win increased French support against extremists.

Mr. Ait Ahmad, a leader of Algeria's war of independence against France in the 1950s, told the French daily Anjourd'Hui in an interview published on Monday there were unanswered questions about the hijackers' possible accomplices.

"Was someone seeking to cause a great tragedy with an aim of boosting support from the French opinion and government?" he asked.

Algeria has admitted that security lapses at Algiers airport allowed four hijackers to board the Air France plane with weapons and explosives on Christmas Eve.

The French daily Le Monde said early investigations in Algiers showed the hijackers, their weapons wrapped in clothing, got onto the tarmac through the domestic terminal.

It said the duty security guard was sheltering from rain in a sentry box and did not challenge them as they were wearing uniforms of the state airline Air Algerie. They pointed their weapons at police guarding the aircraft and boarded, first pretending to be carrying out an identity check.

The hijackers were shot dead in Marseille 54 hours later when French commandos stormed the plane, freeing 169 hostages.

There was tension between French and Algerian authorities during the hijacking, and French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur had to intervene personally to convince Algiers to let the plane fly to France. The hijackers killed three hostages in Algiers.

Mr. Ait Ahmad, now head of a minority Socialist Party, said the hijacking showed violence in Algeria could spread abroad and urged Paris to end its support for the Algerian government's crackdown on fundamentalist.

He said hardliners in the French government had encouraged the crackdown in order to prevent Algerian violence from interfering with the campaign for next April's French presidential election. But they had overestimated the capacity of Algerian security forces to control the situation.

He said up to 45,000 people had died in the three-year-old conflict between the government and Islamic fundamentalists which began after the government cancelled elections in 1992 that the Islamists were poised to win.

Mr. Ait Ahmad said security forces activity had become much harsher since President Liamine Zeroual gave up an attempt to talk to the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) and ordered a crackdown two months ago.

"We are seeing an unbearable strengthening of repression against the population and radicalisation of terrorism by armed groups," he said.

"We are saying this policy must be stopped and moderate Islamists must be brought into the political debate to avoid bloody clashes. The current blind repression risks rallying the population on the Islamists' side," he said.

'Suspect tip-off botched'

French police have lost the trail of a group of suspected Algerian fundamentalists after botching a tip-off by British security agents, a report said Monday.

Authorities missed the suspects of Calais after being unable to translate a British fax telling them which cross-Channel ferry the men, travelling in two cars, were aboard, the daily France-Soir said.

The report came amid a security alert over possible Algerian fundamentalist extremism in France following the bloody end of the Airbus hijack drama at Marseille airport last week.

France-Soir said Special Branch and MI5 officers had been monitoring the suspects, including British-based members of the FIS, at an apartment in the plush Belgravia district of London.

Unexpectedly, late Friday night the group left the Belgravia flat and got into two vehicles — a Mercedes and a Toyota four-wheel drive car — before heading towards Dover.

The gang were said to have been seen putting "several packets" into the cars. An urgent fax was immediately sent to French police headquarters in Paris.

But because of the time of night there was no-one on duty who could understand English, and they were therefore unable to act on the message and alert their colleagues Calais until it was too late, the report said.

The suspects had already left the port by the time police at Calais had bene told shortly after 4:00 a.m. (0300 GMT), the France-Soir report said. They are now being urgently sought on the French mainland.

No police confirmation was immediately available of the France-Soir report.

On Friday, one Algerian fundamentalist organisation, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), said it had a "legal obligation" to wage war on France, and warned of extremist action on the French mainland "in coming days."

King sends message to Ramos

MANILA (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday expressed Jordan's desire to strengthen its ties with the Philippines in all fields.

In a written message to Philippine President Fidel Ramos delivered by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the King said Jordan and the Philippines should define their future ties, especially after the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty last October.

Prince Mohammad, currently on a visit to the Philippines, conveyed the greetings of King Hussein to Mr. Ramos, who lauded His Majesty's policies and leadership.

Mr. Ramos conferred upon Prince Mohammad the Seika Tuna Medal of the Dato Order.

Prince Mohammad had earlier met with the speaker of the Philippines parliament and discussed with him scopes of bilateral relations, particularly in potash industries and investment fields.

A view of the collapsed part of a bridge under construction near the Seventh Circle

Part of bridge under construction collapses; workers slightly injured

AMMAN (J.T.) — Four people were slightly injured on Monday when part of a bridge under construction collapsed, Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abhadi said.

Dr. Abhadi told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the collapse occurred when the workers were pouring concrete at a section of the bridge that will connect the Abdoun area and the airport road with the Seventh Circle.

The injured were treated immediately, Dr. Abbadi said.

Other reports put the number of injured at 10.

The injured workers were employed by a private contractor who has a JD 154,000 contract to build the bridge, Dr. Abbadi said.

Preliminary inquiries found that the collapse occurred because of insufficient support pillars, the mayor said.

The contractor was trying to complete work ahead of schedule, Dr. Abbadi said. The contractor will rebuild the collapsed part, he said.

Heavy fighting rages in north Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — Heavy fighting is raging between rival Kurdish groups in the northern Iraqi city of Erbil, hampering the distribution of aid to needy Kurds, a senior U.N. official said on Monday.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said on Monday that 472 people had been killed in the battles.

"This fighting has killed 472, including 42 children and one woman. The two cliques have indiscriminately shelled each other's positions, using heavy artillery," the agency said, in a report monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

Travellers reaching Mosul, 90 kilometres from Erbil, said that hundreds of families had fled the fighting.

"The security situation is bad in Erbil in particular and tense elsewhere," Mohammad Zejjari, United Nations coordinator in Iraq, told Reuters.

"As of this morning we have reports of heavy fighting inside and outside Erbil. One of the hospitals was severely damaged," he said.

The fighting pits the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) led by Massoud Barzani against the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) headed by Jalal Talabani.

After Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf war over Kuwait, Iraqi Kurds set up a regional government under Western protection away from Baghdad's authority. But it failed to disarm the rival Kurdish groups.

Last May, clashes between the PUK and KDP killed hundreds of people and led to the set up of two de facto spheres of influence in the region.

Mr. Zejjari said no party was in control of Erbil, a Kurdish stronghold.

Masri forming 15-strong bloc in Lower House

By Tareq Momani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Former Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Taher Al Masri is reportedly putting the finishing touches to the formation of a new parliamentary bloc grouping 15 deputies.

The new group, which is still to be named, includes, in addition to Mr. Masri, Ali Abul Ragheb, Abdul Razzak Tubeishat, Awad Khleifat, Talal Obeidat, Abdul Karim Al Dughmi, Jamal Saraireh, Anwar Hadid, Mohammad Daodieh, Samir Habashneh, Fayad Jarrar, Samih Farah, Ibrahim Samara, Nazih Ammarin and Fawzi Tueimeh.

According to parliamentary sources, the trend towards the formation of new blocs came in the wake of contacts between deputies following the endorsement of the 1995 draft budget law which has now been referred to the Senate.

These sources believe that active deputies are seeking strong blocks in order to wield greater and more powerful influence in Parliament.

Last month a new parliamentary bloc was formed. The "independent national action front," according to a spokesman for the group, resulted from the merger of "the National Action Front" and "the Independent Parliamentary Bloc," totalling 17 deputies.

If these blocs come into force, observes believe, many deputies will change positions and alliances giving preference to those closer to their own political stands.

According to observers inside the House, there is a strong tendency for the formation of a wide-based coalition of blocs which could have a greater pressure on crucial decisions in various issues.

With the expected formation of the new blocs, the Lower House would have six main groups: The Islamic Action Front (17 seats), the Independent National Action Front (17), the National Front (10), the Democratic Alliance (9), the Al Ikhaa Bloc (7) and the new bloc to be formed by Mr. Masri (15).

These blocs could undergo further changes in the event of a new government being formed or if the present government undergoes a major reshuffle.

Jordanian industrialists begin 6-day Iraq visit

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A 52-member team of Jordanian industrialists left for Iraq Monday seeking to consolidate trade links ahead of the possible easing/lifting of the more than four-year-old international sanctions against Jordan's eastern neighbour and one-time largest trading partner.

The delegation, headed by Amman Chamber of Industry Chairman Khaldoun Abu Hassan, will hold talks with Iraqi ministers and senior officials as well as Iraqi businessmen with a view to preparing for the post-sanctions period and possible trade during the interim, said Ali Dajani, an advisor to the Amman Chamber of Industry.

Mr. Dajani said the team's visit was in response to an invitation extended by the Iraqi public and private sectors and noted that Iraqi industry and trade Minister Mohammad Mahdi Saleh, who was in Amman, had expressed keen interest in the visit.

According to Mr. Dajani, Jordanian exports of foods and medicine and other "humanitarian goods" exempt from the sanctions totalled JD 77 million (about $110 million) in 1994. "Jordanian-Iraqi trade is steadily improving but we need to do a lot more," said Mr. Dajani.

Pre-crisis Jordanian-Iraq trade was around $700 million, with Iraqi oil exports to Jordan accounting for more than half that amount. With the imposition of sanctions, Jordanian exports were limited to food and medicine and related goods approved by the U.N. sanctions committee.

Mr. Dajani said the mission to Iraq would seek "barter trade" — Iraqi sulphur and dates in exchange for Jordanian food and medicine. "But the trade would come only if it is approved by the sanctions committee," he said. "We believe that Iraqi date exports could not be included in the sanctions if only because dates are a basic food item for many in the Arab World, including Jordan."

Noting that dates are consumed in large quantities during the fasting month of Ramadan, Mr. Dajani expressed hope that Jordan would be able to import Iraqi dates as well as Iraqi sulphur for Jordanian fertiliser industries soon with approval from the sanctions committee.

Jordan needs large quantities of sulphur for its fertiliser industry. The Kingdom's need for sulphur is also expected to rise dramatically when two fertiliser plants being built in the south come on-stream next year.

The delegation visiting Iraq will also explore possibilities of enhanced trade links after studying the requirements of both sides, Mr. Dajani said.

Asked whether the newfound relationship between many European and Far Eastern businesses with Iraq while Jordanian businessmen were largely absent from the Iraqi market has set back prospects for enhancing Jordanian-Iraq trade links, Mr. Dajani expressed confidence that the Kingdom's exporters would be able to ensure their share of the Iraqi market.

"We are so near to Iraq, and there is no problem in transport," said Mr. Dajani, citing the factors in favour of Jordan. "Our industries are well aware of Iraqi requirements and some of them have dormant capacity. In addition, we have abundant manpower."

Furthermore, he said, Jordan's increased adherence to international standards and specifications and quality requirements was another factor in the kingdom's favour.

Although trade links suffered as a result of the sanctions, the Amman Chamber of Industry continued to serve as a "reference window" for the Iraqi public and private sectors, Mr. Dajani said, explaining that the chamber was constantly offering its services to Iraqi officials and businesses to attend international seminar and trade and industry-related activities inside and outside the region.

The mission to Iraq will also seek to add an Arab regional and international dimension to Iraqi-Jordanian trade relations, Mr. Dajani said. "It is necessary that the relationship fits into an Arab framework as Jordan moves to enter the World Trade Organisation and international trade agreements," he said.

The mission will spend six days in Iraq, holding meetings and visiting Iraqi industrial sites.

8 policemen killed in Egypt

MINYA, Egypt (AFP) — Suspected Islamic militants shot dead eight policemen and three civilians in a series of blood New Year attacks in the troubled Minya region of southern Egypt Monday.

An Interior Ministry statement said that four attacks, in which at least two people were also wounded, all took place near the town of Mallawi, about 300 kilometres south of Cairo.

They were among the bloodiest incidents since Muslim militants launched a violent anti-government campaign in March 1992. Police said they took place within the space of one hour.

The gunmen fled in all four incidents and security forces launched a huge manhunt in the region, calling in reinforcements from neighbouring Assiut province, including armoured vehicles.

The Interior Ministry said five policemen and two civilians were killed and another policeman was wounded when gunmen opened fire on the passengers of a minibus in Roda village.

The gunmen had ordered the minibus driver to stop, forced the passengers to get out and then "opened fire indiscriminately," the ministry statement said.

Police said the gunmen had checked the passengers' identity cards before opening fire.

Later gunmen fired at a van heading towards Ashmunin village near Mallawi, killing a policeman and a civilian and wounding one other civilian, the ministry said.

Police said the attackers had chased the van in a car, riddling it with bullets. They put the number of wounded at three, including a 13-year-old boy.

In the third incident, gunmen fired at a bus on the Cairo-Aswan road near Roda, killing a policeman.

Witnesses said three gunmen had waved the bus down and the driver had stopped, believing it was a police check.

"Three strangers got on the bus and asked if there were any police on board," one witness said.

"The policeman, thinking it was a police check, identified himself. They took him off the bus, he tried to resist and one of the gunmen shot him dead with five bullets."

Another policeman was shot dead in his car in Mallawi in a fourth attack, the ministry said.

Police said the attacks were launched by the outlawed Gamaa Al Islamiyah group in revenge for the killing of six militants Wednesday in a police raid.

The latest deaths raised to 567 the number of people killed in unrest since March 1992.

Some 323 were killed in 1994 alone, according to an AFP toll.

Police launched a series of operations in 1994, killing several Gamaa leaders arresting hundreds of militants and smashing various groups.

Mallawi has been under a curfew since the autumn.

The town has become an Islamic militant hotbed since a police crackdown on militant hideouts in Assiut last year.

"Large numbers of merchants have quit the town in fear of their lives, closing down shops and stores in what was previously the busiest Upper Egyptian town," the English-language Egyptian Gazette wrote.

Scalfaro set to pursue bid to find new premier

ROME (Agencies) — Italy's President Scalfaro starts a second bout of talks Tuesday to find a successor to outgoing premier Silvio Berlusconi and pull the country back from the brink of a second general election in eight months.

The coalition government and opposition parties remain deadlocked over the succession after Mr. Scalfaro ended a first round of talks with various party leaders Friday.

But the president said he would press ahead with efforts to find a consensus candidate as most of those he had met were opposed to snap elections.

Mr. Berlusconi had earlier urged Mr. Scalfaro to call fresh elections on March 26 on the grounds that parliament had lost its legitimacy and betrayed the will of the people who elected it last March.

This was rejected by Mr. Scalfaro, who said in his New Year message that Mr. Berlusconi had to make sacrifices in the general interest of the country and assured voters that the parliament had "in no way lost its legitimacy."

The prime minister, who spent the holiday at his Saint Moritz villa, has said the only way of avoiding snap elections would be for his former coalition partners in the Northern League, to jettison his arch-rival Umberto Bossi as leader.

The league's move to withdraw its parliamentary support forced media baron Berlusconi, who is currently under investigation for alleged corruption, to tender his resignation on Dec. 22.

The candidates likely to dominate Mr. Scalfaro's make-or-break talks Tuesday include moderates from Mr. Berlusconi's Forza Italia, Public Works Minister Giuliano Urbani and Foreign Minister Antonio Martino, as well as European Commissioner for Internal Markets Mario Monti.

But the current favourite appears to be Senate leader Carlo Scognamiglio.

Mr. Scognamiglio has strengthened his chances by backing Mr. Scalfaro's stance in holding back from snap elections, saying that parliament must first exhaust all other ways to revive a majority capable of forming a government.

"The elected chambers haven't lost their legitimacy in scarcely eight months," he said, adding that if the parties failed to reach an agreement Mr. Scalfaro would have no choice but to dissolve the parliament.

Mr. Berlusconi said at the weekend he believed Mr. Scalfaro was "correct" to pursue his negotiations as he understood how complex the situation had become, and added he was "not disappointed" by Scalfaro's declared intent to do so.

Press reports said Mr. Scalfaro would not reappoint Mr. Berlusconi to head a new government, even an interim one to prepare for elections in the spring.

Opponents of the millionaire businessman are against snap elections, but Forza Italia spokesman Antonio Tajani insisted early elections must be held and prepared by the outgoing government.

Rebel Kurds kill 19 in Turkey

ANKARA (R) — Rebel Kurds killed 19 people, mostly women and children, in a raid on a village in southeast Turkey, officials said on Monday.

They said the guerrillas who raided Hamzali village in Diyarbakir province on Sunday night, killed eight women, seven children and four men. Six others were wounded.

The rebels of the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) abducted three men as they fled in the dark. Troops were combing the area in search for the guerrillas.

President Suleyman Demirrel reacted angrily to news of the attack. "I'd like to hope that this incident on the first day of the New Year will show everyone what Turkey has to fight..."

"I bring this savagery before the attention of our people and of the world," he said.

Hamzali is one of the village in southeast Turkey which refuse to support the rebels and provide men to serve as village guards paid by the government. They are often the target of PKK attacks.

"They attacked Hamzali because the village did not support them. It was a guard village," one official said.

"Life is the most sacred of human rights. This incident which deprived 19 of our citizens of their right to live is the ultimate violation of human rights," Mr. Demirel said.

Turkey faces strong Western criticism for alleged human rights abuses mostly in the southeast where troops are fighting PKK guerrillas since 1984.

"I ask everyone to refrain from supporting this movement (PKK) directly or indirectly," Mr. Demirel said.

More than 14,000 people, including 3,500 civilians, have been killed in the PKK's 10-year-old fight for a separate Kurdish state in the southeast.

Iraq assails Turkey

Iraq criticised Turkey on Monday for allowing allied planes to use bases on its territory to protect rebel Iraqi Kurds.

The ruling Baath Party's newspaper Al Thawra said Ankara's decision to extend the mandate for six more months would backfire, leading to further instability in Turkey itself.

"Turkey sides itself with the Western alliance which openly aims at spreading chaos and destruction in the region as a whole," said Al Thawra.

It said Baghdad could no longer take Ankara's concern for Iraq's territorial integrity seriously "at a time it has turned its territory into a springboard for the continuation of aggression against Iraq's sovereignty and security."

U.S., British and French planes guard a "no-fly" zone over northern Iraq to prevent the Iraqi military from mounting attacks on the area.

Under Western protection, Iraqi Kurds set up a regional government away from Baghdad's authority but their local administration crumbled as a result of in-fighting between rival Kurdish groups.

Clashes between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) erupted last month and the Baghdad media has spoken of hundreds of casualties.

COLUMN 8

Study says too much exercise may be bad

SYDNEY (R) — Too much intense exercise might make you sick by reducing the body's ability to fight disease, according to an Australian study published Monday. Researchers at the University of Western Australia, writing in the Medical Journal of Australia, said they had discovered that intense exercise dramatically cuts levels of glutamine, a substance vital to the body's immune system. "This reduction in available glutamine may be sufficient to reduce immunological reactivity and place subjects at risk of infection," microbiologist and team leader David Keast wrote. The team concluded that checking glutamine levels could be a good way of measuring if athletes are exercising too much, before their health and performance suffer. "It is tempting to speculate that glutamine supplementation may also be beneficial in the treatment of athletes affected by exercise induced stress and overtraining," the researchers said. The team compared glutamine levels in the blood of seven men who exercised at different levels once a week with levels in five soldiers who exercised intensively twice a day for 10 days. When the seven exercised at the most intense level, average glutamine fell to 560 micromoles/litre (umol/l) from 1,244. Among the soldiers, highly trained members of the Australian army's Special Air Service regiment, levels fell immediately in four of them and all five had significantly lower levels 11 days after the programme started. The soldiers' average glutamine levels fell from 630 umol/l on day one to 328 on day 11. Levels continued falling after the exercise programme stopped and it took until the 16th day to regain starting levels.

Pensioner seeks police help over unfaithful wife

MUNICH, Germany (R) — An 85-year-old Bavarian man called police for help on New Year's Eve after his wife locked herself in their bedroom with her lover, German police said Monday. The man told police his wife, who was also 85, had refused to open the door to him. He asked the police to come and throw her friend, aged about 50, out of the house because he was too old and frail to do it himself. When the police told him they could not intervene in domestic disputes, the pensioner retorted: "I shall just have to be unfaithful myself then."

Armless Norwegian treks to South Pole

PUNTA ARENAS, Chile (AFP) — A Norwegian athlete who lost both his arms in a childhood accident hiked and skied his way to the South Pole, according to reports here Saturday. Cato Zahl Pedersen accomplished his feat last Tuesday accompanied by fellow Norwegians journalist Odd Harald Hauge and publicist Lars Ebbesent. Temperatures in the polar region dipped to minus 16 centigrade (three degrees Fahrenheit) during the 1,400-kilometre (870-mile) trek.

Murayama catches cold, skips engagement

TOKYO (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama cancelled plans to watch a foot race Monday after catching a cold, the Kyodo News Agency reported. Mr. Murayama, 70, lost his appetite and was resting in Hakone, a resort west of Tokyo, where he had been scheduled to watch an inter-university relay race, the agency quoted aides as saying. He had been seen by a doctor but there was no cause for concern and his Jan. 11 visit to Washington would be unaffected, they said. Mr. Murayama apparently became overtired visiting his home town of Oita, in southwestern Japan, where he attended a series of receptions, Kyodo said.

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